

THE HAZELWOOD STORIES

THE ROSEBUD CLUB

BY

GRACE LE BARON

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE MISS FAITH" AND "LITTLE DAUGHTER"



BOSTON
LEE AND SHEPARD
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THE ROSEBUD CLUB

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TO
HER WHOSE "LITTLE DAUGHTER" I WAS, AND WHOSE
STAR OF MEMORY IS ALWAYS MY
LIGHT AND MY GUIDE,
MY MOTHER
I DEDICATE THESE SIMPLE STORIES OF CHILD LIFE

A PREFATORY LETTER

To My Young Readers, —

I CANNOT close the covers of this, the last of the Hazelwood Stories, without one personal word of greeting and good-bye to you, my unknown little friends and critics, who have so earnestly followed the life story of my children of fancy.

My older readers, both on and off the press, have been most generous in their kind words, but I am very sure that they will readily understand me when I say that it is you, little readers, who have been the most helpful of all — for, was it not for you the books were written?

And having reached your hearts, my chosen object is accomplished,—to win your favor and criticism, and, better than all, your appreciation and love for all that is good in this world of ours, and as well, to show to your elders and guardians that books of high moral tone, full of incident of the lives of good children, can be made quite as attractive to young readers as those whose only aim is to amuse.

In these little stories I have made no attempt at sensationalism, and if, at times, sentiment is found in their pages, it only serves to open your hearts to the sweeter thoughts of life. I feel that the Hazelwood Stories have not been written in vain, so long as they have inspired such words as these you have written me, my young and unknown readers; nor has

their moral been lost upon you, while you thus express the wish to be like my little heroines, — unselfish, patient, and good children !

I ask no higher honor than to be known as “ the children’s friend,” and so as yours — you who read this !

Sincerely,

GRACE LE BARON UPHAM.

FALCONS-HEIGHT-AT-THE-ILKLEY,
BOSTON.

WEST M——, *Feb.* 15, 1895.

DEAR MISS LE BARON, —

I was very much delighted with your book, “ Little Miss Faith.” I think it is lovely. I like the part where Faith thinks more about other people than herself. I wish I was like her. Mamma read most of the story to me, and one night she let me stay up a little later, because I got so interested in it. I will soon try to get another of your nice books from the Sunday-School Library.

From your little friend,

HELEN T——.

B——, *Oct. 21, 1894.*

DEAR MRS. UPHAM, —

Thank you ever so much for writing that book, "Little Miss Faith." I thought it was lovely. I wish I was like Faith. I think you write lovely books.

Yours,

ROSAMOND H——.

WEST M——, *Feb. 10, 1895.*

DEAR MRS. W——, —

I think that Little Miss Faith is one of the most lovely and patient and kind little girls I ever read or heard about. I wish the lady who wrote about Faith would write another story just as good as it.

I think the book is lovely.

With love to the lady who wrote the book,

EDITH L. S——.

[FORWARDED.]

CALIFORNIA, *March 17, 1896.*

MY DEAR MRS. UPHAM, —

Mamma says when anybody does something for us, we ought to thank them for it. So I want to thank you for writing those pretty little books, "Little Miss Faith" and "Little Daughter," 'cause that was doing a lot for me.

I felt like they were real friends.

Please write some more about Elsie and her friends. Good-by.

Your little friend,

CARA I. N——.

W——, *Dec.* 12, 1895.

DEAR MRS. UPHAM, —

I read your pretty book, "Little Daughter," all Thanksgiving Day. I fell in love with Elsie, she was such a sweet little girl.

I hope I shall meet you some day.

Good-by,

ALICE C—— A——.

W——, *Jan.* 5, 1896.

DEAR MRS. UPHAM, —

"Little Daughter" is the nicest book I have read. I read both of your books, "Little Miss Faith" and "Little Daughter," in about a day. They are very interesting, and tell all about country life. I would enjoy another volume very much.

Your dear friend,

BARBARA M——.

B——, *Sept.* 18, 1895.

DEAR MRS. UPHAM, —

I was very much pleased with your book, "Little Daughter." I like it as well as I did "Little Miss

Faith." I hope you will write a whole lot of books, because they are so nice.

All the little girls will love you very much, because you write such nice stories for them.

Your friend,

ROSA H——.

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THE ROSEBUD CLUB

CHAPTER I

“**M**ISS LOVELACE of London!”

So it read.

And Elsie Lovelace,
seated before the little
steamer trunk that she
called her own, that
she alone was to pack,

and that was to go with her across the
water, read over and over again the
address upon the bit of paper before
her:—

“Miss Lovelace of London!”

Repeating the words aloud to her mother, who sat by, she said thoughtfully, —

“‘Miss Lovelace of London!’ I suppose that means me, mamma. Does it, do you think? and will I have to be called so, I wonder? I hope not. I like just Elsie better; don’t you, mamma?”

“‘Miss Lovelace of London!’ How old it sounds! I wonder what there is in this queer-looking bag, anyway, mamma dear.”

And Elsie held up to her mother a miniature mail-bag, made after the same style, and of the same striped material, as those that Uncle Sam uses to carry his precious letters to and fro through the public streets of the great cities. The address was written upon a piece of paper sealed to the bag, while hanging from one of the leathern handles was a note bearing the same address, “Miss Lovelace of London!”

Elsie opened the note, and read aloud to her mother, —

DEAR ELSIE, —

We, your schoolmates and friends, have each written you a little letter for you to read each day of your journey over the water.

There were so many of us that we have numbered the letters, and we hope that you will find time to read them all, every one.

We have left a page for you to write us a few words in reply, and put into the stamped envelope we send you. You will find the envelopes inside our letters.

We only ask you to tell us how you and your dear mother get along on the steamer. We hope you won't be seasick. We shall miss you always. Of course we are very happy that you are going to have such a nice home over there, but we shall wish you back with us every day.

Please do not forget us. We shall all be looking for you to come back soon to your

LOVING SCHOOLMATES AND FRIENDS.

P.S. Please do not open the bag until you get on the steamer.

“Like all postscripts,” said Mrs. Lovelace, “a most important part of the letter; for we might, without it, have learned secrets not intended for our ears until too far away to believe, or to contradict them.”

After Elsie had finished the letter she sat for a time in silence, and her mother was the first to speak.

“No, little daughter,” she said, “we will never forget all these dear friends who have made our life in Hazelwood so happy, and although new acquaintances may cross our paths and come into our lives, yet in our hearts we must always treasure most fondly the memories of those we will ever hold dearest, because our oldest friends.”

“O mamma,” replied Elsie, “sometimes it seems to me as if I must take

them all away with us ! My giant godfather and my dear fairy godmother, and all my little friends !

“ How I do love them all !

“ How I do wish they could all go with us over the water !

“ Perhaps, dear mamma, they can come and visit us by and by. Some of them, anyway. Every one has been so kind and good to us here in Hazelwood — everybody ! Haven’t they, dear mamma ? ”

“ Yes,” replied Mrs. Lovelace, “ I am quite sure that Griffin Gate can never open its doors wider in welcome to us than has Falcons-height for almost two years.”

Two years !

As Mrs. Lovelace repeated the words, she seemed as if in thought over the memories of those two years.

Two summers had now been spent by Elsie and her mother in Hazelwood.

Two happy summers!

Two happy summers at Falcons-height, the home of Judge and Mrs. Goodwin!

The woodbine on its trellis had shed its autumn foliage once again, and the rosebushes were again laden with the Christmas snows, and as the tall trees swayed in the winter wind, both Mrs. Lovelace and her little daughter went back in thought to that day in the month of roses,—that day in June, two years before, when they came as strangers to Hazelwood, bidden there by Mrs. Goodwin, the Lady Bountiful of Falcons-height.

The one shadow over the happy past was associated with little Faith Goodwin, the only daughter of the great house, who was now with the angels; but her

sweet smile seemed still to hallow the home on the hill, while her memory was ever kept green, not only in that home which in her short life she had graced, but as well in many of the humbler ones of Hazelwood.

It was Mrs. Lovelace who again broke the silence, bidding Elsie to go on with her packing, —

“Come, little daughter, let me see how well you can pack, and then if you find it too difficult a task, mamma will be by your side to assist you.

“Come, let me see, what shall it be first, dearie?” she asked.

Lending herself to the pleasant task before her, Elsie replied, —

“Well, first I am going to put in these three little books, mamma, to read some day when I don’t feel just well.

"You see, mamma," she continued, "I expect to be a little seasick; for Bessie Barrett told me that her aunt who lives in New York was so sick when she went over to London, that she had to have the doctor. So if I have to lie a-bed, I shall have my little song-book to sing from, and the 'Hazelwood Stories' to read.

"I don't suppose that I can take Dollie Dorothy in this trunk, can I, mamma?"

"Oh, yes, dear," replied her mother. "I think there will be room for her; and I shall carry medicine enough for you both!

● "So wrap her carefully in some article of clothing, if you wish her to go."

Despite her jesting, Mrs. Lovelace was fearful that Elsie would be somewhat affected by the sea voyage; and so Dollie Dorothy was really allowed to go as a

companion to Elsie's expected misery, and to be a comforter to her little mistress.

Carefully Dollie Dorothy was wrapped in the folds of a cotton-flannel nightdress, while about her were packed the clothing needed for a sea voyage.

There was a little gray flannel wrapper with pink rosebuds woven over it, the latter looking so real as to suggest, if not the very rosebuds themselves, the dainty Dresden china that is seen in the shops. The little gown was tied with pink satin ribbon, gracefully looped at the neck and waist; and bed shoes of pink and gray worsted to match completed what Elsie* called her "*mal-de-mer* costume."

This little bit of French was her only knowledge of the language, and had been learned from Judge Goodwin, after much hectoring from the latter, in which he had

always told her that he had a conundrum for her, but that he would wait for his answer to it until she landed in London: "Why is *mal de mer* like sea-sickness?"

The pretty costume was placed near the top of the trunk, and the miniature mail-bag, with its unread messages, was put so as to be close at hand when the travellers should board the steamer.

Mother and daughter would often stop in their packing to talk over past pleasures and future plans.

"Dear Uncle Jack!" said Elsie. "He thought he was going to make us happy when he left us all his money, I know, mamma; but if he could only have lived, how much nicer it would have been, for then we might have gone to visit him, and come back again to Hazelwood!"

"Shall we ever come back here again,

do you think, mamma dear?" she asked, after a short pause.

"I hope so, dearie," replied Mrs. Lovelace; "for although England is our home by right of birth, America has been to us by adoption a real home, and so we will look forward to a return here some day."

"And a very wise conclusion that," said Mrs. Goodwin, who then entered the room, and thus interrupted, adding, —

"Falcons-height, you remember, gives you only a vacation, and that but for a few months. I hardly know how I am to content myself with even that separation from you both, you have become so dear to us here."

Saying this, she walked up to Elsie, and imprinted a kiss upon the cheek of the little girl, adding with much feeling in her voice, —

"It is hard for me to give you up, little girl. It was hard for me to give her up; but you came to me just when my heart and home needed you most, and you, and your good mother have helped me to be brave. We shall miss you both, oh, so much! Here always will be a home open to you, however. Remember that."

"Yes," said Mrs. Lovelace; "we know that well, and we are not unmindful of the happiness we have had in it already, dear friend."

"And I shall never forget," said Elsie, "that day when I first came to Hazelwood, fairy godmother."

"You remember it, don't you—mamma?—but of course you don't. I forgot that you came a few days afterwards."

"I remember well how grand the yel-

low-wheeled coach looked! And how it reminded me of Cinderella and her fairy godmother. I remember how I asked you, Mrs. Goodwin, to be my fairy godmother! And you have never run away yet, either; but then I have always been in bed at twelve o'clock," said Elsie with a merry laugh.

"No, Elsie," replied Mrs. Goodwin; "but it is you who are running away from me now. Sometimes I try to be selfish, and wish that Rev. Mr. Oldrive had not been so successful in finding your Uncle Jack; and then I chide myself for the thought, and wish you, as I do now, every good wish, dear ones, and in time a return to Falcons-height!

"But come, let us all go down to supper; for it is the last one for a long time, you know, that we shall eat together, while

little Jamie can hardly enjoy the prospect of a longer stay with me, so unhappy is he at the thought of you two going away to-morrow.

“ I hear him now hurrying down the back stairs — thoughtful child that he is ! He said to me the other day, —

“ ‘ Mrs. Queen Lady, I think if I stay any longer here with you, that I had better go down Bridget’s stairs ; for my old wooden shoes (meaning his crutches) will kill all those birds on your stair-carpet, and wear it all out.’

“ But the doctor says that Jamie will soon be about as well as ever, and I have written his mother that I need him for company for a while longer.

“ Mrs. Oldrive is going to take care of him for the few days that I shall be away with you, for I am going to see you safely started on your journey.”

"Oh, are you going with us, god-mother dear, to New York?" asked Elsie excitedly.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Goodwin; "and the Judge is going too. We are not going to leave you until you reach Neptune's domain."

"How nice it will be to see you both till the very last minute! Won't it, mamma?" asked Elsie.

The question was answered by one glance only at Mrs. Lovelace's smiling face.

All followed to the dining-room.

Judge Goodwin stood waiting for them, chatting meanwhile with a little boy who was balancing himself upon his feet as best he could.

"See!" he said to Judge Goodwin.
"See! I shall soon give up my crutches;

and when I get to be a big man you'll see I'll earn lots of money for my mother and my Queen Lady!"

Jamie had given this name of the "Queen Lady" to Mrs. Goodwin on the first day of their meeting in the children's hospital at B——, where he had been taken after the accident that had made him its victim; and the memory of those days was still with him. Nurse Marvin, who had waited on him then faithfully, could always quiet his restlessness by telling him about the "Queen Lady" and her little daughter Faith, whose picture hung above his cot; for he had been the first inmate of the Faith Goodwin ward of the hospital in —— Street.

So it was the "Queen Lady" that he always associated with his mother in tender thought, and ever since he

had always planned his future for them both.

“And what are you going to do, my boy, to support such an extravagant family?” asked Judge Goodwin, with a twinkle in his eye.

“Oh, I don’t know, sir, just yet; because, you see, if I can’t walk, why of course I can’t be a policeman, can I?” answered the boy.

“A policeman!” repeated the Judge, with a laugh. “‘A policeman’s lot,’ so the song goes, is not always ‘a happy one;’ and, too, I fear your bank account will hardly hold out to do much for others.”

A boy’s ambition! how rarely followed up by the little fellows!

“Well,” said Jamie, in a very confident manner, “I can do something, anyway, and earn lots of money; and my mother

shall wear silk dresses all the time, and my Queen Lady, when she gets old and sick, shall have me to wait on her, just as she waits on me now!" and the little fellow's face became radiant at the prospect of such a future.

"What is that you are saying about me, Jamie?" said Mrs. Goodwin, as the trio entered the dining-room.

"Oh," replied Judge Goodwin, "Jamie is laying bright plans for his future, just as all boys do; just as I did once for my Queen Lady," and Judge Goodwin motioned his wife to be seated in the chair he gallantly placed for her at table.

The breakfast-hour threatened to be one of solemnity; but each one combined to make an extra effort to forget the parting so soon to come into their lives.

Even Jamie was allowed a freedom of speech seldom his at table ; for he had always been taught that "little people should be seen and not heard."

He said, looking into Elsie's face intently, —

"I wonder, Elsie, if boys are as nice as girls?"

"I know, of course, though, they are just as nice as girls," continued he, with a boy's loyalty to his sex.

"I know they are just as nice in some ways ; but I mean, I wonder if Mrs. Queen Lady will like me just as well as she does you?" and Jamie stole a sly glance at his hostess, then continued earnestly, —

"I am going to try and do just as you do. When I get well I am going to feed the birds in the morning, and by and by I am going to see old Widow Hunt, and

get Bridget to make jelly for her, just like that you take her, and —

“Oh, I am going to do lots of things! When the snow goes away I am going down to the churchyard, and I shall carry some big roses, just as you do; and then, perhaps, when you hear all I’m doing of your work — why, you’ll just want to come back yourself, Miss Elsie!” concluded Jamie, betraying in his closing words the real motive, that it is to be feared, dictated some of them at least, — to attempt by his hectoring to move his companion to an early return to her home in Hazelwood.

Elsie, as if to upset his well-laid plans, asked, —

“And how long are you going to live in Hazelwood, Jamie?”

Jamie received her question in momen-

tary silence, then bravely answered, with a look at Mrs. Goodwin,—

“Just as long as I am urged to stay. Shall you urge me to stay all the whole winter, do you think, Mrs. Queen Lady?”

“Because, if you do, I know, ’most, my mamma will let me stay, just as she did when you urged me that other time.

“Then I can go home when the summer comes, and go with her and Boney and my little sisters to grandpa’s again, just as I did that time you met me, Elsie, on the train. Don’t you remember?”

Yes, all at table well recalled the time that brought them sadness and joy! and were very glad to be interrupted in their thoughts by Rachel, who announced a caller.

The breakfast over, the family adjourned from the dining-room.

Throughout the day the bustle and confusion of packing was mingled with the parting greetings of the many who called to wish "God-speed" to the dear people, so well beloved by all.

Later, the midnight chimes of St. John rang out the dying year; but Falcons-height folk heard only the echoes in their dreams, singing a blessing upon the coming year for all, —

Happy New Year !

CHAPTER II



HAPPY New Year!

The very snow-birds,
as they hopped among
the naked branches of
the trees about Fal-
cons-height, or
pecked away, in the
snow, as if in search
of Jack Frost's hidden

treasures, seemed to sing,—

“Happy New Year! Happy New
Year!”

They joined as in one voice in the
song; for the crisp air and the bright sun
inspired them, and, too, they grew quite

sure of their breakfast of crumbs from Elsie, whose custom had been to feed them every morning.

Raising her window, she tossed to the ground on this bright New Year's morning a generous quantity of bread-crumbs, and wished her little friends, —

“Happy New Year!” adding, —

“I won't be here to give you any more crumbs, little birds, for a long, long while, but I will tell Bridget not to forget you, and I know that she won't. So don't worry, and I shall have your English cousins to look after over there. Do you want to send them any message, little birds?”

Some of the snow-birds had become very tame by long acquaintance with their little mistress, and would fly towards her, and take from her hands the few crumbs that she held back for them.



"I wish you a Happy New Year." — Page 25.

“Mamma, mamma!” cried Elsie to her mother.

“Mamma, do come and say good-by to my little family; but first, mamma, I wish you a Happy New Year! And here is a kiss for you, blessed mamma!”

As her mother leaned forward to receive the kiss, a little bird, more daring than his fellows, flew up to Elsie, and pecked at her face, then with a merry twitter flew away to join the rest of the feathered tribe.

Elsie closed the window, and turned from it just in time to hear Rachel's voice outside the door calling them, —

“Come! come to breakfas', Miss Elsie! Don' yo' know it's mos' de las' minute with po' ole Rachel, and de breakfas' is a-waitin', and so am de missus?”

“Oh, wait, wait just a minute, dear Rachel!” called Elsie.

"Wait, please; I want to wish you a Happy New Year;" and Elsie opened her chamber door to the old house-servant, and placed in the latter's hands her little toy bank, with its rattling pennies, saying, —

"A Happy New Year to you, dear Rachel, and here are all my pennies for you. I have been saving them for weeks for you for a New Year's present. Happy New Year to you!"

"Bress dat chile! Bress you, you pick-aninny you! What for shall I do with 'em?" said Rachel. Then, as if an idea for their use suggested itself, she said, —

"Oh, I know, Miss Elsie, jes' de i-denticullest thing! Thank you!"

"What is it, Rachel?" asked Elsie. "What will you do with them? There are only a few, anyway."

“Oh,” replied the faithful servant, “it makes no diff’ence howsum many there be ; I shall put them all to *circulashun* for yo’ birthdays—dis year dar’ll be two for sho’ !”

By the unfortunate use of the word “circulation,” Rachel gave a very different idea from that she intended to convey ; viz., that she would place Elsie’s stock of pennies where they would *accumulate* before the June birthdays should come.

Rachel would always give the plural when speaking of Elsie’s birthday ; for she never forgot that it had been her little Missy Faith’s birthday too. And fresh flowers would no doubt decorate on the coming second anniversary of the memorable day the many pictures of her little mistress which graced the rooms of Falcons-height ; and probably, as once before,

Rachel's "mite" would go as a pittance, "from an unknown friend," to help minister to any inmate of the Faith Goodwin cot in the hospital at B——, all "for her sake."

The poor woman looked really quite forlorn as she turned away from Elsie's door, and said reverently, —

"Bress de Lor', old heart! Don' yer be revolutionuss!"

Elsie and her mother followed to the breakfast-room; but long before they reached it they heard the New Year's greetings interchanged, and joined theirs to those of Judge and Mrs. Goodwin, while little Jamie Armitage, not to be out-done, boy-fashion-like, cried, "Hooray for New Year's!"

Then, remembering that Elsie and her mother were to leave Hazelwood on this

same happy New Year's Day, added in a disappointed manner, —

“Nothing very happy about this day, though, is there, Mrs. Queen Lady?”

Yes, it was the beginning of the New Year, but it was also the beginning of a new life for Elsie Lovelace! and as she went about the dining-room with a New Year's kiss for all, it was indeed hard, to quote Rachel's words, —

“Hard to b'lieve there was plantations in Lunnun, all for that sweet chile, so simple-like.”

When the news came of the dear Uncle Jack in London, that told of his love for his little American niece Elsie, as he called the latter, and that he had, through the help of the good minister, Rev. Mr. Oldrive, sent his dying message to her, and died with a blessing upon his lips

for Elsie and her mother, and left the former his large estate in London, everyone in Hazelwood, while joining in Elsie's sorrow for her dear uncle, rejoiced as well with her at her good fortune; but in the pleasure of the future prospects for the little girl, the parting day had been overlooked; but to-day it stared all the good people of Hazelwood in the face, and in every home in the village preparations were being made to send the travellers away with a hearty "God-speed!"

All too soon the hour of departure arrived, and two sleighs were seen cutting their way through the snow, the one bearing the family from Falcons-height, and the household servants in the other; for Mrs. Lovelace had conveyed Elsie's wish to Mrs. Goodwin, that Rachel and

Bridget and Robert might have the same privilege as James, who was to drive the family to the station.

Robert, the gardener, had been forcing his plants in the conservatory ever since the few days before, that Bridget had said to him, —

“It’s a sorry day for us, shure, that’s to come.

“Oi’ll not be sthaying long afther her, Oi’m thinking. Me sisther Honora has been afther wanting me to coom oover to the oold counthry; and noo, faith! Oi’ll have to be afther going; for with her shmile gone, it’ll be loonesome toimes enoof.”

“Who is it, Bridget, that you mean? Not the little mistress! She is not going away, I hope, is she?” Robert had asked that day; and Bridget had answered, —

“The very same, shure, Miss Elsie!

“Her ooncle the oother day died, and Miss Elsie has all his pounds, bad loock to this day! but niver bad loock to her, plase God!”

From that hour, Robert had seemed more than ever attentive to his conservatory friends, and by careful pruning and nursing and feeding, as he termed it, with a “strawberry-and-cream diet,” he was now enabled to carry in the sleigh from Falcons-height, his floral tribute to the little girl and her mother, who had brought so much happiness to the great house on the hill.

Over the road the sleighs from Falcons-height sped to the sound of the merry sleigh-bells, passing on their way every kind of conveyance that could be brought into use, until it seemed almost as if

Hazelwood was enjoying a fashionable sleighing carnival !

Little Milly Morris, sitting in her Grandpa Stimpson's lap, held the reins loosely over a shaggy old horse, whose hoofs beat in measured time upon the snow-covered roads.

Grandpa Stimpson, although to be sure a comparatively new comer to Hazelwood, had easily come under the charm of Elsie Lovelace, from the day of his first meeting with her in the summer woods, when she had reached the old man's tender heart, by her promise to his little granddaughter, that Santa Claus should not forget the latter's "teenty tointy baby bruvver."

This promise Elsie had herself redeemed at Christmas time ; and so to-day, Milly would insist upon taking her French

dollie (that she had named for Elsie) "to say good-by to her grandma!"

As the sleighs drew up one by one at the Hazelwood Station, there was really a small army of boys and girls all waiting together.

Worsted hoods and scarfs, and caps drawn down over the ears, could not disguise them; for their bright faces shone out, and bespoke a greeting and a parting equally sincere.

The children arranged themselves in line as the sleighs from Falcons-height appeared, and their untrained voices rang out in a little song, hastily composed by one of their number, simple in its rhythm and words, but sincere in its sentiment.

Earnestly they sang, clapping their hands together to keep time with the chorus.

In the month of roses,
When the fields were fair,
And the daisies nodded
Every — everywhere !
Came a little maiden,
Fair as any flower,
Making life the sweeter
From that happy hour.

When the roses faded,
And the ripe fruit fell,
And the leafless maples
Shivered in the dell ;
Still the little maiden
Cheered our every heart,
And we prayed, “ God bless her,
Let her ne’er depart ! ”

Now the snows of winter
Cover all the earth,
And a sorrow greets us
With the New Year’s birth ;
For our little schoolmate
Sails the seas across,
“ God-speed ! ” true, we wish her,
We shall mourn her loss !

Hope shall ever cheer us,
Faith shall still be ours,
That the summer sunshine,
When it brings the flowers,

May lead her back to us,
To delight the eye,
So we sing, "good-morrow,
Never a good-by."

CHORUS. Good-day and good-morrow,
But never good-by.

There was no questioning the meaning of the simple words, for they told plainly their own story; and each child seemed so impressed with the sentiment and the hour, that their voices put an emphasis upon the song, even though the music was open to criticism.

Mack Harkins, the station-agent, whose laziness, like his good nature, was proverbial, had actually been led to hide the flaunting, gaudy posters upon the walls (that announced a greater number of by-gone, rather than anticipated, attractions) with evergreen trimmings, while the awkward-looking stove, that had stood for

years reaching out its rusty pipes like arms into hidden corners of the station, seemed to give out an unusual warmth, due to Mack's well-meant resolve to give the travellers "a warm send-off."

Indeed, Mack could never cease recalling that day in June when he so carefully followed his orders to —

"See that little mite of luggage delivered at Falcons-height before dark."

Truly, then, as now, a little child was the leader of the hour; and, as the children's chorus sounded, the villagers gathered about the travellers, and vied with one another in good wishes for a "*bon voyage*," and a return to Hazelwood.

Elsie, who was herself moved with regrets at going, flitted about through the crowd, and was often lifted up bodily by some stalwart man, whose admiration for the little lady thus showed itself.

“Well, Elsie, and so this is the way you give us a New Year’s greeting, is it? A New Year’s parting is its true name. However, you and your good mother will always have our prayers and our good wishes,” said Rev. Mr. Oldrive, the popular minister of the village. Then, raising his hands as if to silence the crowd for a moment, he gave his benediction to the hour, concluding with much fervor,—

“‘Conduct them in safety to the haven where they would be’—home!”

As he repeated the last word, he left much room for a difference in opinion; since Hazelwood people could never feel but that Elsie and her mother were theirs, and the little village must be their true home.

The local train, which stood meanwhile

waiting, signalled its departure, and the travellers got aboard.

The last sounds heard from Hazelwood friends were the words of the simple chorus in which all joined lustily, —

Good-day and good-morrow,
But never good-by!

while a shower of evergreen sprigs seemed to say that the memory of Mrs. Lovelace and Elsie would ever be kept green in the hearts of Hazelwood village-folk.

The travellers arranged themselves in the dingy car, whose walls had been enlivened by Robert; for while the others had been joining their voices in song, he had urged the brakeman's co-operation, and the two together had worked a genuine transformation scene in a few minutes, aided by the contents of the

mystical-looking box the trusty gardener had brought with him.

Mottoes woven in greens and flowers were speedily hung about; and so the ride to the city was in truth full of sweet memories of Hazelwood and its faithful people.

One last parting message from Bridget, who had vainly attempted to reach her closely hooded head up to the window-pane, echoed on the crisp air, although it is very doubtful if Elsie heard the humble request made of her.

“If ye plase, Miss Elsie, will ye be afther looking up me sisther Honora, over there?”

The first stop the travellers made was at —, where they connected with the train for New York; and great indeed was their surprise to find comfortably

seated therein Miss Green, the lady who had first brought about the meeting between the Goodwins and Mrs. Lovelace and her little girl, two years before.

The first surprise over, Miss Green said, laughing, —

“And so you expected to get off to the other world without me, did you? I am not so easily dropped from the roll-call of your friends. So here I am, you see.”

“And we are very glad to have you here,” replied Mrs. Lovelace.

“Although,” she added, in a more subdued manner, “the sight of each one whom we love really makes it harder for us to leave.”

“Well,” Miss Green replied, “don’t spend so much time in thought over leaving that you forget to return to us.

We are only lending you to London for a while, you know, — for a very little while.”

It was midnight before the travellers reached New York, and the bustle of the city at such a late hour was a surprise to Elsie, whose bedtime had been regulated for two years almost by the musical call from the tall hall clock of Falconshight, when it struck the half-hour after eight.

The chestnut-venders seemed to enlist her sympathies the most as she rode along in the carriage ; and an Italian who stood warming his hands over his rusty little stove will ever have cause to bless his unknown benefactress, who stepped quickly from the carriage, and placed in the man's outstretched palm a bright silver dollar — Judge Goodwin cautioning

her, as he gave her the silver-piece to thus bestow in charity, not to buy any of the fruit of the woods, which he said contained "an hour's indigestion in every chestnut-burr."

Even the fascinations of the brilliantly lighted hotel were dimmed by the sleep that hung about the heavy eyes of the travellers, and all retired quickly, Elsie quoting from her favorite poem, —

"You must wake and call me early,
Call me early, mother, dear."

"This isn't quite the happiest day I hope of the New Year, for I feel all the time such a funny feeling way down in my heart, and the tears are just ready to come if I will let them; but I won't, would you, mamma?"

"I'll just look out of the window and

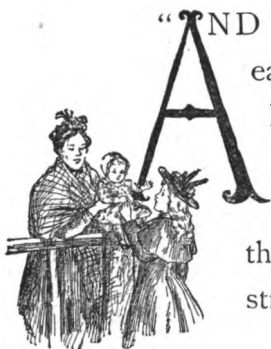
say good-night — to — her! — You know who!”

Elsie never forgot to say “good-night” to the one star she had named in fancy for Faith Goodwin; for it was the latter who had taught her the pretty sentiment of the stars, calling them peep-holes into heaven through which the angels looked, and shed their heavenly light and guidance to those below.

True, it was only a fancied sentiment, but it had been a hallowed pleasure to Elsie ever since that twilight hour that she first learned it from the lips of her little foster-sister, — her guardian angel! and nightly she would give her parting smile to the little star of — Faith.

Blessed, thrice blessed, oh, simple faith of childhood!

CHAPTER III



“AND this you call waking early, Elsie?” said Mrs. Lovelace, as the latter opened her eyes to the morning sun, just as the clock on the mantel struck the hour of eight.

“Well, mamma dear, you said you would call me, so I just went to sleep thinking that you would; and oh, I have been having such a nice time in my dreams tossing snowballs with Jamie,” replied Elsie.

“Your mother, dearie, is forced to confess that she has but just waked herself,”

said Mrs. Lovelace, adding; "but, after all, sleep will do us more good than a look through the shops, with no money to spend."

After dressing hastily, Elsie and her mother joined their travelling companions in the drawing-room, and all went to breakfast.

The dining-hall, as Elsie expressed it, looked "as if a breakfast-party was being given!"

"Dear me," she said to her mother, "so many people I never saw before together. A real knife-and-fork reception! — isn't it, mamma?" she asked with a laugh. "I wonder if there is any one here that we know, mamma, or knows us; but of course not."

"No; I think not, little daughter," replied her mother.

Hardly had she uttered the words, however, when a young lady, looking at Elsie from across the room, bowed to the latter in a most familiar way, and waved her hand as if to some old friend.

“Who is she, Elsie?” Mrs. Lovelace asked.

“Well, truly, mamma, I can’t say myself,” replied the mystified Elsie.

But the young lady was determined to be recognized by more than a bow, so, leaving her companion at table, she came over to Elsie’s side, saying,—

“You do not know me, I see, little girl. Miss Elsie, I suppose I ought to say, or perhaps Miss Lovelace.”

“Oh, no, not that, not that, please! I am just plain Elsie,” interrupted the child.

The young lady continued,—

"Is it possible that you do not remember those chattering magpie girls that rode with you on the train that summer day when you went to Hazelwood?"

"Oh, yes I do!" said Elsie.

"Yes; I do remember you now, very well, and you were the very young lady that sat just opposite to me, and passed me your box of candy; but you never told me your name, then," said Elsie, as if asking for the desired information.

"Well, we all knew yours, because we read it on the tag you wore pinned to your sack," replied the young lady. It read 'Elsie Lovelace.'

"And what is yours, please?" asked Elsie, made somewhat bolder by the memories of that day.

"Mrs. Abbott," replied the lady.

"Mrs. Abbott!" repeated Elsie in great surprise. "Why, I did not know that you had a husband."

"No; I did not have one — then," blushing replied the new-found acquaintance.

Elsie meanwhile had become so interested in her companion that she actually forgot to introduce the latter to her mother, and Mrs. Lovelace, overhearing the name called, said, —

"I imagine that we have a young bride to congratulate. Introduce me, little daughter, please."

"Yes," said the lady, blushing deeply; "and we are just going to Europe on our wedding journey."

"And so are we going to Europe to-day," said Elsie.

"To-day?" asked Mrs. Abbott.

"Yes, now, almost," replied Elsie; "at twelve o'clock."

"At twelve?" asked the other, surprised. "In steamer ——?"

"Yes; the very same," replied Elsie and her mother in one voice.

"I shall meet you there," said Mrs. Abbott; "for we are going on the very same steamer ourselves."

This pleasant coincidence seemed to add good cheer to the travellers, and so, with a mutual promise to meet again at the steamer, young Mrs. Abbott joined her husband; and Elsie, turning to her mother, recalled to her the day that Mrs. Abbott and she first met in the cars.

"There were four of them, mamma," she said; "four young ladies, all laughing and talking so fast, mamma, that, while they amused me, I was so lonesome I

sometimes wished they would stop and let me think of you.

“I was wondering, you see, blessed mamma, how you would get along without me, and how I should ever get along without you, dearest mamma. But I didn’t have to get along very long without you, did I? Only two days, you remember.”

Then, as if thinking of her little companion at Falcons-height, Elsie became silent for the moment, but was aroused from her reverie, by the busy waiter, who asked for her order.

“What would you like, dear, for breakfast?” said Mrs. Goodwin.

“Oh, anything! Everything! I am so hungry!” replied the child.

“Not everything, surely, little daughter,” said her mother, “for see all this

variety;" and she held up the breakfast *menu* with its long and often foreign story.

As Elsie read it she thought it was "a pretty big breakfast for even a great big man like my giant godfather."

"You choose, mamma," she continued, "and I know I shall like just what you order. I don't think I like such company breakfasts. I like just those we have at home!"

Home! How much the word conveyed to her and to all present at the table.

Home! Each day would find her and her dear mother going farther away from it! Each night would find her looking back in tender memory to that dear home in Hazelwood that had sheltered them for almost two years; and with this memory would always come that other one of the hallowed little spot in the church-

yard, over which God and the snowbirds were now watching!

The hour for getting on board the steamer was fast nearing, and together the little company started.

The carriage was well filled, and the Judge insisted upon riding with the driver on the box outside, in order to make room inside for the ladies; their wraps, satchels, and the like serving to "make a full house;" so said Judge Goodwin, as his towering form overshadowed the diminutive-looking driver, who sat beside him on the box.

Over the pavements the carriage jolted, for the snow had melted in the streets.

Soon the pier was reached, where the turmoil was tiresome to see and hear! Baggage was being trundled along in its noisy way to its destination in the hold

of the great steamer! men were going to and fro! while the crowd on the steamer itself, was so great that Elsie innocently asked, —

“Is the President on board, do you think, mamma? or who is going away that there is such a big crowd?”

Mrs. Lovelace replied in merry jest, —

“Why, you and I are going away, little daughter.”

Yes, the little group that had come to say a last good-by to Elsie and her mother was few in numbers, in comparison with the many who waited to bid adieu to wife, or husband, or children, or friend; yet throughout the length of the steamer it was doubtful if more sincere messages of parting good-will were bestowed than those upon the travellers from Hazelwood.

Up the gangway the tread of feet kept its steady sound!

Elsie had already become interested in a little baby, whose cries were calculated to drown even the bustle of the baggage-men, while its mother, who stood looking wildly on, tried in vain to quiet the little one.

At her dress tugged two other little children, trying to reach up as their mother was doing, to the rail that separated the steerage passengers from their more favored companions.

The woman herself looked a picture of misery, and her wild eyes seemed to search through the crowd for one friendly hand to be outstretched to her.

Elsie, with her natural fondness for little babies, was the one to bring the smile to the tired-looking watchers. Stealing

away from her companions for a few moments, she took the hand of the wee baby and held it in her own, and listened earnestly to the pathetic story of the emigrants, told by the sad-faced mother of the little family.

As one happy family they had left the old country—the good man of the house with them. In America they knew they had relatives somewhere, although just where they could not tell. On the voyage the father of the family had been taken ill and died; and as the mother could not prove any visible means of support in the new land of America, she was now sent back by the authorities, and was commencing her journey to that lonely home that she had left, but yesterday it seemed, with hopes as high and heart as light, as those of the bride and

bridegroom on board, who lived in one another's smiles, and were now taking their first journey of life together.

It took but a moment for Elsie to hear the emigrant's story, but her sympathetic heart was open to it; and although called by her companions to join them in the saloon, she carried away with her the memory of that infant's innocent smile, and the honest prayer of the tired-looking mother.

"Good loock to ye, miss, plase God."

"Who was that, Elsie, you were talking to?" said her mother.

"Oh," replied Elsie, "I don't know, I forgot to ask her name, mamma, and the baby was such a little bit of a thing, I don't believe it had any."

So was Elsie's interest in the "widow and the fatherless" first manifested!

What will it lead to?

The long table in the main saloon of the steamer was literally filled with flowers of every perfume and hue, nor were the names of our travellers missing from the list of cards that marked the owners and donors of the floral offerings; for the Sunday-school of St. John and Hazelwood friends had not forgotten this last tribute to the passengers from Falcons-height, while Judge and Mrs. Goodwin pointed to a large box of Mermet roses, and said, —

“ Good-by, dear friends, good-by. Let those roses speak to you of us, and say all manner of sweet messages we must, for lack of time, leave unsaid.”

And, as if to prove the words, came the warning, —

“ All ashore, that's going ashore ! ”

One last wave of the hand !



"Good-by, dear friends." — Page 58.

One last fluttering of the handkerchief!

A parting kiss tossed at random towards the waiting crowd on shore! and the great steamer sailed out of the harbor!

On and on, past the towering form of Liberty, with her guiding torch!

Past the travellers' friend, Sandy Hook! —and the passengers commenced in earnest their life upon the water!

Mrs. Lovelace and Elsie betook themselves speedily to their stateroom, and attempted to arrange their temporary home.

Opening the steamer trunk, the first thing that greeted them was the Hazelwood mail-bag; but before reaching the letters they drew out a series of needful articles that loving hands had made for their comfort.

A large case of brown linen bound and

decorated with red tape was speedily hung to the wall.

Its little pockets contained pins, needles, thread, and, in short, every useful article of the kind needed for a sea voyage.

By its side they hung another, a case of simple medicines; and so each day the travellers would they felt, be reminded of old friends at home.

"I think, mamma," said Elsie, "I will wait until to-morrow before I read the letters, because I may have something then to tell.

"Perhaps we will see a whale! who knows? or perhaps Mother Carey's chickens, or perhaps one of us may be seasick!" and Elsie tried very hard to look solemn.

The afternoon passed away, and night closed in.

The heavens were bright with stars ; the moon was so bright, too, that, despite the cold, little groups of people sat about the deck, and the chorus of " Home, Sweet Home," rang out over the waters.

It was ill timed, Mrs. Lovelace thought ; but she afterwards learned that a party of English people were looking forward to their return to that dear home of theirs in merry England.

Alas, the tune to the Hazelwood travellers brought only memories sweet, but sad, of that happy home they had but just left !

.

Down, down in the closely packed steerage, one other heart, the heart of the emigrant, sang its discord to the tune !

But the chorus finished, and silence alone reigned, while the stars ever kept vigil until the morning.

Twinkling stars ! silent friends ! good-night !

CHAPTER IV



FIRST night at sea!

It matters not how early or how late in life it comes to the traveller, it always brings its peculiar sense of newness, and, in a measure, of loneliness, with the thought of the dear ones left behind!

On and on the great steamer ploughed through the water, and Elsie, waking in the night, could not resist looking out the peep-hole window of her stateroom,

and watching the waves beat one by one against the sides of the boat.

It was a novel sight to her, and the refrain of the little song rang with comfort in her ears, —

“Is not God upon the water
Just the same as on the land?”

Noiselessly returning to her berth lest she might waken her mother, she laid for a time, not in sleep, but in thought; then, forgetting herself, she said aloud, with vehemence, “I will go to him in the morning, the very first thing!”

Her new-formed resolution aroused her mother from sleep, and she called to Elsie, —

“Are you dreaming, little daughter?”

“No, mamma, not dreaming, but planning,” replied the child.

"Planning in the night?" asked her mother; "you had better by far be sleeping, little girl."

"Yes, I know," said Elsie; "but everything seems so strange out here on the water that I cannot sleep as I did at home at Falcons-height. I wonder what they are all doing?" she asked.

"Thinking of us, wherever they are, I know," replied Mrs. Lovelace. "Those dear friends will never forget us! But who, pray, are you intending to call upon to-morrow, Elsie?" she asked.

"The captain," replied Elsie.

"The captain!" repeated Mrs. Lovelace; "and for what? I should really like to know.

"Why, my dear, captains have no time to talk with children! Then, too, you do not know him," added Mrs. Lovelace,

in a tone intended to discourage any too-high hopes that her little girl might have.

"Mr. Abbott does, and he will take me to him, I know," replied Elsie, in all the simple faith of a child.

"And for what?" asked her mother, with just a faint suspicion of knowledge dawning upon her.

"O mamma, dear, I will tell you all by and by, of course," said Elsie; "but I wish I could see the captain first.

"Can I, dear mamma? Do say that I may!" pleaded the child.

Mrs. Lovelace, with her complete confidence in her little girl, ceased her questionings, and urged the latter to go off to sleep, and wait patiently for the morning to come.

All through Elsie's sleeping dreams,

as in her waking ones, an infant's cry seemed ever calling to her; for the little steerage baby had been the cause of much of her sleeplessness; but the baby itself was in dreamland despite its surroundings, and as it smiled in its innocent sleep, it will never be known, whether, as is the tradition, that the angels were talking with it, or whether Elsie's projected plans for the morrow were casting a happy halo of anticipated blessings about its innocent life.

Unfortunately, however, for Elsie, when she awoke to her first day at sea, peculiar sensations were hers!

Her head had a strangeness about it that she could only explain by saying to her mother, "It seems way off somewhere."

Trying to be merry, she said,—

"I guess it has gone to join the piece of my heart I left in Hazelwood, mamma."

Her appetite was gone, and she begged that she might lie a-bed for a while.

Mrs. Lovelace knew only too well that Elsie had become a victim to seasickness; but, as she herself was a very good sailor as well as nurse, a bowl of gruel, and regular doses of the medicine she had brought with her for just this expected moment, kept Elsie from being a case for the ship's surgeon.

Elsie's greatest disappointment was in knowing that she could not, as planned, call on the captain.

Great was her surprise, however, to hear, later in the day, a loud knock at her stateroom door, and greater still to see the towering form of Captain Frazer enter, in response to her mother's "Come in!"

“Good-morning, madam,” he said to Mrs. Lovelace.

Then, taking the little patient’s hand in his broad palm, he said in merry jest, as he leaned tenderly over Elsie, —

“Why, this will never do, child! We charge those passengers who eat the least, the most, and gruel will soon be a very expensive diet for you, little girl, if you keep on with it.”

“If you please, sir,” said Elsie in her innocent way, “if my mamma could only go out into your kitchen, she could make nice gruel for me, and we would not have to trouble your cook, please, Mr. Captain.”

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed the captain. “My kitchen, I fear, would prove to be much like the ‘spider’s parlor.’ Your mother, I am afraid, could ne’er come back again; for who goes *down* my

'winding stair,' would find it pretty hard work to get back;" and the captain laughed again heartily.

"Tell me," he continued, "what is it you want of me, little one?"

"Mr. Abbott said that you wished to see me.

"Am I to be court-martialled, I wonder?" he asked with mock gravity.

"I wonder how Mr. Abbott knew that I wanted to see you, Mr. Captain?" asked Elsie in surprise.

"I fancy," interrupted her mother, "that I was the tell-tale, dear.

"When I went in to breakfast this morning Mr. and Mrs. Abbott both asked for my little girl, and I told them of the restless night you had, little daughter, and how disappointed you were in your plans to see Captain Frazer."

This was the confession that Mrs. Lovelace made; but she did not think it at all necessary for her to confess that she had told Mr. Abbott her suspicions of Elsie's plans.

"But, mamma, dear, I thought you said that captains did not have time to talk with children," said Elsie; then added in a very earnest way, as she grasped the great strong hand of the dignified man standing before her,—

"O Mr. Captain, how good of you to come to see me!

"I am almost afraid though to tell you what I want to do. I know you will laugh at me, even if you don't say 'no.'"

Then, as if encouraged to go on by Captain Frazer's honest face and kindly manner, Elsie said timidly,—

“Do you care if I get up a sewing-class on board your ship, sir? I saw four or five little girls come on the steamer when I did, and I know 'most that they can sew as well as I can; and when I tell them I want them to sew for that poor little baby below in the steerage, who has no father, and no money, and no clothes hardly I know they will all be glad to come to my sewing-school.

“I planned it all out in the night, you see, just exactly as mamma told you.

“Now, I want to put up a little note of invitation, and ask them to come to my sewing-circle, and bring their thimbles too—but where we can have it, I don't just know.”

Elsie hesitated for Captain Frazer's answer.

Was it the thought of his fair-haired little girl at home, the memory of whose parting kiss was still dear to his heart? or was it the thought of the fatherless children below, with the sorrowing mother, whose case had touched his own sympathies? that prompted his very emphatic reply, —

“My little girl, you shall have a saloon somewhere on this steamer, if I have to get the ship’s carpenter to build one!

“Up shall go your invitation as soon as I return below to write it. So hurry up, little one, and get well. Teachers can never afford to be sick, you know.”

“How can we ever thank you enough?” said Mrs. Lovelace, who had caught the spirit of the hour. Neither was she ever surprised at any of Elsie’s plans, especially where a baby came into the project.

"Do not attempt to do so, madam," said Captain Frazer.

"I was equally interested in the poor woman's case from the outset, and I shall be only too glad to lend myself personally to it, although officially I cannot act in the matter.

"Your little girl, I am sure, will be blessed in her efforts; for ready hands and open pocket-books will, I prophesy, relieve this most distressing case of sorrow and destitution.

"Here," he said, passing to Elsie a crisp ten-dollar bill, "here, little girl, is your first contribution from *Mr.* Frazer, or perhaps I had better say from Miss Frazer; for my little girl, Frieda, who is about your age, is one who would be only too glad to do her share, were she not now waiting for the return of her papa to London."



“I will love her, oh, so much!” — *Page 75.*

“ If I ever see her, Captain, I will love her, oh, so much ! as I do you, sir, now ! ” said Elsie, the joy of the moment flooding her face with happiness, and driving away the pale looks that had come with her seasick hours.

“ Frieda Frazer ! Why, her name is so pretty, I love her already. May I kiss you for her ? ”

As Captain Frazer leaned down to receive Elsie's kiss, it was hard to tell which was the more affected, Elsie, with her eyes filled with tears of happiness, or the sturdy captain, who dropped one tear upon the child's face, before he closed the stateroom door, leaving it as a blessing upon Elsie's sweet life of benevolence.

After Captain Frazer had passed out, Elsie said to her mother, —

"Now, he is better than medicine, mamma. See, I feel better already!"

She attempted to walk about, but found herself too unsteady on her feet to do much.

She resigned herself to remaining in her berth, and asked to have her books and her mail-bag placed beside her.

Opening the latter, by a strange coincidence the first letter that she drew forth was from Jamie Armitage.

She read:—

DEAR ELSIE,—

I hope mine will be the first letter you will read, because it will make you think of Falcons-height first of anything. I hope you won't be seasick. If you are seasick, I know every one will be good to you.

If I was there, I would tell them how kind you are to every one, and then I know they would all be kind to you.

Rachel's letter is inside of mine. Good-by,
Your little friend,

JAMIE.

"Dear old Rachel!" said Elsie, as she read the faithful servant's words:—

"De Lor' bress you, Miss Elsie! an' His stars,
'specially His pertickler one, shine 'bout yo'.

OLE RACHEL."

Still another bit of a note was folded within; and although poorly spelled, and illy written, it conveyed this sentiment to Elsie:—

"Woould ye be afther lookin' up me sither Honora soomwhere in Oold Ireland? God bliss ye!"

Elsie had too often heard of Bridget's sister Honora not to know who dictated the unsigned note, although it seemed a problem to her and her mother how and where she was to take the first step to find the unknown Honora.

"I think we shall have to give up that conundrum, dearie," said Mrs. Lovelace;

“although,” she added with a laugh, “we might commence our investigations in the steerage below!”

To each of the letters Elsie added in the space left for it a message to her correspondents. To Jamie's she affixed this word to Judge Goodwin:—

“Tell my giant godfather I know now what *mal de mer* means—and seasickness too, and they are so much alike that they are the same, the very same! As I have not yet landed I shall look for that box of candy he said he would give me if I guessed his conundrum before I reached London.

ELSIE.”

After reading a few more of the notes inside, she tried to sing a little song, but decided that her voice was not quite in tune, and dozed quietly off to sleep, dreaming (who shall say?), perhaps, of her contemplated plans for the morrow for the little steerage baby, whose tiny hands

rested as placidly on the rough and tear-stained face of its sorrowing mother as if an angel guided them there!

And was not the angel of peace and contentment its chosen guide?

CHAPTER V



ELSIE'S first day at sea had not been as particularly enjoyable as she had anticipated.

When she awoke the second morning she did not quite know a fitting reply to her mother's anxious inquiry, —

“And how does my little girl feel to-day?”

Hesitatingly Elsie replied, “I really do not just know how I do feel, blessed mamma; but if I can get down to the dining-saloon, I shall say I am all well.

I only want another bowl of that nice arrow-root gruel, mamma dear, for my breakfast this morning."

Mrs. Lovelace, as a further test, asked Elsie in a joking way, "At what hour are you going to call your sewing-pupils together?"

This was just the stimulant the little patient needed, and Elsie replied promptly, —

"Just as soon as I get my bowl of gruel, mamma."

"But one thing has troubled me greatly," said Mrs. Lovelace; "I cannot yet understand where you are to get your materials to sew with. You know there is no village around the corner, with Aunt Debby's little store to choose from, and the city is far, far away."

"Yes, I know that, dear mamma," said Elsie, looking out of her stateroom win-

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"Yes, I know that, dear mamma," said Elsie, looking out of her stateroom win-

dow, and seeing only water everywhere about her. Not even a sail was to be seen on the great ocean! and the few sea-birds who ventured to fly about the steamer seemed tiny in comparison with their surroundings.

"I know that, dear mamma," said Elsie; "but I think there will be plenty to work with when I tell everybody what I plan to do, and what I want them to do."

After breakfast Elsie and her mother, under escort of Mr. Abbott, proceeded to the saloon, expecting to see only the few little girls Elsie had named to Captain Frazer, with possibly their parents.

Imagine Elsie's great surprise to find the saloon well filled with a waiting audience of old and young!

It was not at all strange that her courage forsook her at the sight of so many

people, and she was very glad indeed to have Mr. Abbott speak for her.

The latter explained the object of the meeting, and told in forcible words the case of the poor woman in whose interest all were met.

Hardly had he concluded, when a genial-looking old man cried in an enthusiastic manner for contributions of money.

A fashionable-looking young man grasped his Scotch steamer-cap, and passed it around among the interested passengers. Silver and gold coins and crisp bills met side by side in the cap ; and as the young man passed it well filled into the hands of the little missionary of good, Elsie's eyes filled with tears of joy. She could only smile through them her thanks to the generous contributors.

As yet, however, Elsie's particular plan

of relief had not been communicated to the waiting company, so bracing herself up to the great occasion, she timidly said, —

“I thank you all, dear good people, for coming here this morning ; and you have done so much, I don’t hardly dare to tell you what I was going to do myself.

“It isn’t anything, now that you have done so much.”

“Speech! speech!” merrily cried the crowd.

“Tell us! tell us!” they cried again and again.

Thus encouraged, Elsie said, —

“Well, I wanted to have a sewing-school, so as to make some little dresses for that poor dear baby, and I wanted to beg from each little girl’s mother some article of clothing ; for my mamma can cut it over, and make it fit. Can’t you,

mamma dear?" asked Elsie, turning to her mother, who stood by.

Mrs. Lovelace helped her little girl in her planning by offering to adapt to present needs any contribution that might be sent in, and announced that she herself would matronize the sewing-school during its short session.

One by one the lady passengers asked to become members; and it began to look as if the little steerage baby and its mother would land with an enviable wardrobe and a goodly bank account!

Day after day the sewing-school was in session, and much was accomplished by busy hands, while hearts were, as well, in unison with the great work of benevolence; and not only was the helpless infant provided for, but the other children came in for a share in the bounty. Every

one seemed inspired to do for the "widow and the fatherless" and "even the least!"

.

The journey was fast drawing to its end, and the sight of land was looked forward to with eagerness. It became more customary to signal a passing vessel or steamer; and finally, one night Elsie and her mother went to their berths with the assurance from the captain that when night again came to them they would be in London.

"And," he added, —

"I hope, little girl, you may some day meet my Frieda; for you are much alike in many ways, and would be well-mated companions."

"I wish I could meet her," said Elsie.

"Won't she come and see me, Captain Frazer, don't you think?" she asked.

"That depends much upon where you are going to live, my child," replied the captain.

"London," continued he, "is a great world in itself; the largest city in the world."

"Yes, I know, sir," said Elsie. "I learned that in my geography."

She continued, —

"We are expecting Miss Middlebrook to meet us when we land, and then we do not just know what we are going to do after that. But wherever we are I shall write and tell you, sir, if you will only tell my mamma where you live; for I thank you, oh, so much, for helping that poor little steerage baby."

"That reminds me, little lady," said Captain Frazer, "how is your mother going to distribute the money which the

purser of the boat is keeping for safety now?

"How is your mother going to give it to the woman? She had best see her early to-morrow morning; and I advise putting the money in trust for her in some bank, soon after our arrival, first giving her enough for immediate wants."

So it was decided; for Captain Frazer was looked upon as such a kind adviser, that his advice was readily heeded by Mrs. Lovelace.

When the last day on board came, the sorrowing woman, with her tiny baby in her arms, by the direction of some unknown friend, tapped at the door of Elsie's stateroom.

"Good-morning, milady! And is it that ye wants to see me, I don' know?" said the humble woman.

Elsie, as she returned the greeting, opened the old blanket that covered the infant the woman held, and peeped into the little one's pretty face.

It smiled at her in its innocent way, and chatted in its baby language, until one could almost have fancied that it recognized in Elsie the good friend that she had proved herself.

Mrs. Lovelace took the baby, and hastily dressed it in some of the neat clothing which had been made by the industrious and benevolent passengers; then, wrapping it in a little blanket that had been also contributed by a young mother on board, she passed the child back into the arms of the surprised woman, who said, —

“God bliss ye! God bliss ye! Shure, whin I lost me ould man, I thought I

had bist die meself, but faith, I must live noo for their sake, — me childern !”

Mrs. Lovelace explained as she gave to the poor woman a small part of the money and the extra clothing, that by the kindness of all on board, her little girl had been helped in doing good ; and Mrs. Sullivan with her baby then turned to leave the stateroom, the former too overpowered to say anything but her humble though sincere blessing, —

“God bliss the swate darlint ! God bliss ye’s all.”

Then, turning back, she said, holding the wee infant in both hands as she stretched them out to Elsie, —

“And will ye’s name her, plase — only a pit name, just for a mim-o-ry. Shure, she has the won name, Katie. Just another, just for a mim-o-ry of ye and to-day.”

For the moment Elsie stood awestruck with the great responsibility of naming a baby !

To be sure, she had always been able to choose wisely for her dollies; but a real, live baby's name was quite another thing, she owned to herself.

At first her confusion would not let her think. Boys' and girls' names mixed themselves together in such a way that she felt that she must decline to name the baby, if only in "mim-o-ry."

"What can I name her, mamma?" she asked, puzzled.

"Whatever you think best," replied her mother. "It is doubtful if she will ever be called anything but Katie, since that is the name already hers. However, please the woman; then you have done your part."

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"Yes, yes; I have one, mamma! Two!" cried Elsie, in a sudden outburst.

"And phwat is it, plase, miss?" asked the waiting mother.

"Columbia Victoria!" replied Elsie, pleased with the fancy of uniting in her loyalty the two names ever dear to America and the mother country of England.

"Let me see if I have it right, shure," said the woman, trying to pronounce such a bountiful name: "Coolumby Victory!" — with a marked accent on the second syllable.

"Coolumby Vic-to-ry!"

"All right, miss," she said, as if satisfied with both the name and her pronunciation.

"But what is your last name?" asked Mrs. Lovelace.

“Soolivan, ma’am,” replied the woman ;
then repeating, she said, —

“Soolivan, plase ma’am.”

Elsie and her mother were forced to allow that the combination of names was not quite ideal, but contented themselves with the thought that America, England, and Ireland would be a rich united heritage for the wee child.

And so was the baby named !

Mrs. Lovelace gave the proud mother a card bearing a London banker’s address, with instructions to leave hers with the same firm, saying that she should communicate in time with her ; for, acting upon Captain Frazer’s advice, the money collected was to be deposited for a while, at least, in the bank : and by the universal consent of the generous contributors, Mrs. Lovelace had been voted trustee.

With a final courtsey and a fervent, —
“ God bliss ye ! ”

the Widow Sullivan wended her way back to her steerage quarters, which by the help of a little child were made to shine as the sun ; for the sunlight of joy and pleasure in the woman's light and happy heart seemed to transform even the dingy home below into a palace fit for the wee baby with its high-sounding name of royalty, — Columbia Victoria !

Preparations had been going on, meanwhile, for landing, although a thick fog promised to mar the expectations of all on board. It lifted, however, just in time for the great steamer to transport its passengers to the tender in waiting, — and then by rail — on to London !

For a moment Elsie and her mother stood as strangers in their own land ! and



“We are the Middlebrook sisters.” — *Page 95.*

a feeling of loneliness was just settling down upon them, when a lady stepped up, and said, —

“I know you both by your pictures.

“Welcome, dear Mrs. Lovelace! and you, too, little Elsie!

“We are the Middlebrook sisters;” and she fairly pulled through the crowd her sister, who lagged behind.

Mrs. Lovelace and her little daughter willingly placed themselves in the care of the sisters, and accepted their hospitality as that of old friends.

Sleep beckoned quickly to the strangers; for only the stars seemed familiar friends to them!

The stars! the stars that ever watch over a sleeping world, and lend that greatest comfort to the wanderer, in the happy thought that dear ones everywhere are

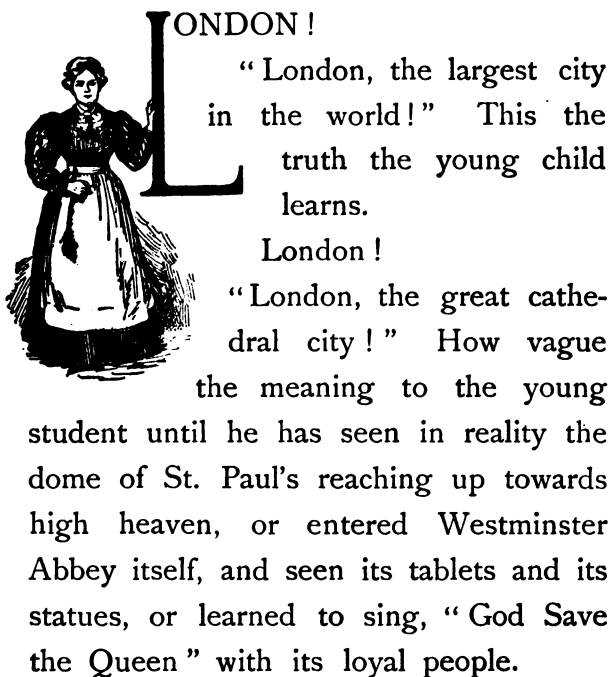
blessing those little messengers of sweet sleep and peace!

Shine on, little stars!

“Twinkle, twinkle!”

No longer need we “wonder what you are,” knowing you to be kind and watchful friends to all of God’s children!

CHAPTER VI



“London, the largest city in the world!” This the truth the young child learns.

London!

“London, the great cathedral city!” How vague the meaning to the young student until he has seen in reality the dome of St. Paul’s reaching up towards high heaven, or entered Westminster Abbey itself, and seen its tablets and its statues, or learned to sing, “God Save the Queen” with its loyal people.

Yes, London may have its fogs, but it has its sunlights as well!

And London may have its sunlights, but it has its long, long twilights too!

The home of the Middlebrooks was apart from the great city itself.

It was a little house, with its pretty rose garden abloom in the summer days; for the queen of the garden is very dear to English hearts.

The sisters had known better days, and relics of that past were everywhere about their little modest home, with memories of those others, — of mother and father!

The old-fashioned Chippendale low-boy now in their modest dining-room, was perhaps a bit too pretentious for its present surroundings; but the glass in and upon it bore a crest that the sisters

rarely forgot to show the stranger visitors to Rosemead.

This would seem, perhaps, to mean that they did not accept their fate in the right spirit of humility.

Not so ! for the sisters, in living their humble life in Hampstead, could and did so live it as to even shed an extra halo about their gilded past, — the halo of contentment in the present, a halo that can transform the peasant's cottage into a palace, and make him "as happy as a king !"

Here it was in this modest little home that Mrs. Lovelace and Elsie first commenced their new life in London !

And Elsie best expressed their content to the elder of the sisters, saying, one morning a few days after their arrival, —

"It seems almost, Miss Middlebrook, as if we had always known you and Miss Maria."

"Yes," replied Miss Middlebrook.

"Mr. Oldrive always had so much to say about Hazelwood and its people, that I really believe that I could tell without an introduction Judge and Mrs. Goodwin, and even the children of the village, Bessie Barrett and Milly Morris and"—

"But," interrupted Elsie, "you ought to have known Faith Goodwin, my dear little foster-sister.

"Oh," she continued, "when she used to live up at Falcons-height we were all so happy, and now,"—

The child hesitated.

"And now what, dear?" asked her interested listener.

"Why now," said Elsie, "my dear

fairly godmother is all alone, perhaps, unless Jamie Armitage is still with her.

“But then,” she added, “he is only a boy, Miss Middlebrook!”

It was well that the little fellow was not about, although Elsie meant no disrespect.

This conversation led for the time being to thoughts of Hazelwood, and reminded Elsie of her few happy cares in the pleasant country home on the hill; and she said in a very earnest manner, turning to her mother, who had been a silent listener,

“I do hope that Bridget won’t forget the birds! But of course she won’t; will she, mamma?”

And the latter answered, —

“Have no fear, little daughter.

“Bridget is too fond of you, if not of your little bird family, to forget them.”

"Oh, yes!" said Elsie.

"I know that too, dear mamma; but I do love the birds so! I love them all; and I am never again going to wear a feather in my hat, because, you know, dear mamma, the poor little things have to pay dearly often for my vanity."

"I would that some of your elders might make the same resolution," said Miss Middlebrook. "Perhaps if they knew how the birds had to be treated to make their hats look pretty, they would resolve, as you have, Elsie, not to wear fine feathers or fine birds. Those pretty aigrets, for instance, that ladies wear, oft-times mean the destruction of a whole bird family!"

This conversation had been held a few mornings after the arrival of the travellers at Rosemead.

The breakfast was over, and the younger sister, Maria, was assisting in the duties of the household; for the Middlebrook sisters always preserved an air of gentility with their one maid-of-all-work that was sometimes surprising to their more extravagant-living neighbors. The latter did not, of course, know how much planning had to be done — yes, and work too — by the sisters, in order to succeed in keeping up their dignity as housewives.

Miss Middlebrook had been excused from her household duties on this morning, in order that she might escort her visitors to the city; and under her guidance the little party of three followed the address given them by Mr. Oldrive in parting, which was to lead to Griffin Gate.

As they neared the great mansion (for mansion it could only be called), Elsie

was moved, not first at its magnificence, but rather by thoughts of her dear uncle, whom she loved once as she now loved in memory.

She seemed not to realize that the beautiful home was hers,—hers to own! hers to live in!—or, if she did, she did not manifest it, but said reverently to her mother as she neared it,—

“And this is where my dear Uncle Jack wrote that long letter to me!”

Ascending the steps, one of the party rang the bell, and asked for the house-keeper who had charge of Griffin Gate.

In response, a clever-looking English-woman, with keys hanging from her belt, came forward, but started back at sight of Elsie; then courtesying, as if to show the great respect that she felt, she said,—

“Pardon, ladies — I am sure this is

the little mistress of Griffin Gate. This little lady must be the master's niece — isn't it? Pardon me the question, but, oh, if you only knew the store he set by her!" she said, turning to Mrs. Lovelace.

"And shall I show you over the house, madam?"

The visitors followed.

Each step seemed to bring them nearer and nearer to the home-life of Uncle Jack. There was a sacredness to the hour, and the hallowed associations with their benefactor guided their thoughts, as their feet sounded through the long corridors and up the wide staircase.

The trusty housekeeper called attention to everything worthy of notice, then, turning to Elsie, she said, —

"And how do you like it all, my

little mistress of Griffin Gate? Here, here are the keys!"

She took from her belt the large bunch of keys she had been wearing, and thrust them into Elsie's hands, which were as much too small to hold them as was her little brain unable to comprehend the situation.

"Long life to you, little mistress of Griffin Gate!" said the well-meaning woman, with another courtesy.

Mistress of Griffin Gate!

Elsie had never been addressed in these words before, and for a moment she was stunned with the length, if nothing more, of her new name.

Mistress of Griffin Gate!

Was she not still her mother's little daughter? and was not that enough ambition for one of her years? she thought.

Mistress of Griffin Gate !

She had never once thought of herself as such, even from that day when, in the library of Falcons-height, before the great open fire, she had received from the hands of Rev. Mr. Oldrive Uncle Jack's last tender messages to her.

Looking through the long corridors, her eyes searched for something she could not find, — happiness of heart !

Happiness !

It responded to her call from her dear mother's smile, and she cried, offering a return of the keys, —

“ Oh, if you please, ma'am, I do not want these keys ! Why, I have only a little steamer trunk. That is the only thing I have that locks ! ”

Turning to her mother, she said, —

“O mamma, I do not want to live in this great big house, do you, mamma? Why, I should get lost in a day!

“Oh, I would so much rather have a little cottage, or a smaller house, — more like Miss Middlebrook’s: Wouldn’t you, mamma, dear?”

And Mrs. Lovelace was pleased to see that the simple tastes of her little girl had not been distorted, or her head turned, by her good fortune.

The party lingered for a long time in the library.

The pictures of Elsie and her mother looked out from a frame of carved ivory, and the faded leaves of the few flowers that had once been a bright decoration still remained.

“Every day, ma’am, the master would put fresh flowers about your faces, and

these be the very last," said the house-keeper.

"Mamma," said Elsie, as they left the house, after saying "Good-morning" to its present guardian, —

"Mamma dear, I wouldn't want to live in that great house, if I could.

"Oh, I would so much rather have a cosey home near our good friends in Hampstead!"

And it was this wish of Elsie's, that met with a hearty response from her mother, that governed the choice of their future home in London.

Much had, of course, to be arranged, many tedious legal steps to be taken; and when at last Mrs. Lovelace and Elsie settled themselves in a little home in Hampstead, in outlying London, not even the neighbors surmised that within

their circle was a little heiress ; for Elsie was to them only the sweet and loving child we have always found her.

She was to every one the same simple, unaffected child, loving and beloved, doing all gentle kindnesses for others, full of plans for the poor, and especially for Columbia Victoria, the steerage waif ; and always looking back in tenderest thought to those dear friends that she and her mother had left behind at Falcons-height, and the little village of Hazelwood.

CHAPTER VII



GRIFFIN GATE!

This name of the new home of Elsie and her mother was given more as a memory of Uncle Jack, than in any attempt to make their simple home look like that other of the name where the latter had once lived.

It was a pretty house, quite overgrown with ivy; and from its upper windows, when the day was fair, one could see Harrow and Highgate, and the beautiful country all about.

The heath just beyond was well worth the short walk, and Elsie and her mother were companions in daily discoveries of the natural beauties of Hampstead.

“Only think, mamma,” said Elsie one day as the two were nearing their pretty home after a pleasant walk, “only think, and this is our home! Ours!”

“It seems such a long, long time since that day Miss Green came to ask you to lend me—lend me to Sister Faith. Oh, it seems such a long, long time ago!”

“Yes, dearie; and it was a long time ago too. Why, it will soon be just two years to a day! for June will be here almost before we know it,” said Mrs. Lovelace.

“And, oh! I have so many things to do before it gets here, mamma,” said Elsie.

"Such a lot of sewing and writing to finish, mamma!"

"Well," replied her mother, "that really sounds as if you were going to be a busy little girl. And what about your books, little daughter?"

"Miss Bascom says, mamma," replied Elsie, "that I am doing better in my studies than any scholar she ever had. I told her that it was because you had always helped me so much, dear mamma.

"I like history best of all, but geography—dear me! I don't believe that I shall ever remember where any place but dear old Hazelwood is, and it isn't on the map, either!"

"No, I daresay it is not," said Mrs. Lovelace.

"Hazelwood, like its loving people, is little known; but did you know, dear,

that we are soon going to have visitors at Griffin Gate?"

"Visitors, mamma! visitors! Who? Oh, who? Tell me, please!" cried Elsie.

"No," replied Mrs. Lovelace. "I think now, little daughter, that I will keep this as my secret.

"You are always having so many secrets, as you call them, that I think that I might have just this one, for a little while at least; and so my little girl must try to cultivate that same spirit of patience that she has so often required of her mother.

"But here comes Miss Bascom; let us meet her."

Miss Bascom was Elsie's new governess, and had been engaged as such by Mrs. Lovelace, quite as much in the wish to give employment and assistance to a

most deserving person, an English girl, as to give instruction to Elsie.

Mrs. Lovelace and her little girl had become much attached to the new-comer; and as she was better acquainted with London and its attractions than they, she was their companion-guide to the city when a holiday from school duties was allowed, which offered a sight of its beautiful cathedrals, or the varying attractions to be found in Piccadilly, or the Crystal Palace beyond the city limits.

“Miss Bascom,” said Elsie, running up to that lady, —

“Did you know that we are to have visitors at Griffin Gate? And only think, mamma will not tell who they are to be!

“Shall we tell her what we are planning, Miss Bascom, or keep it a secret

until she tells us hers?" and Elsie tried to look very wise.

"I am afraid that we shall be obliged to tell ours, because we shall first need her permission to carry out our plans," said Miss Bascom.

"Oh, of course, dear mamma, you shall know all!" and in one long breath Elsie explained, —

"Mamma dear, Miss Bascom and I have been laying such plans! First, you know that I am not very good at writing, just as Miss Bascom says; and then, too, I really would like to get some little girls interested in Columbia Victoria.

"Oh, I have not forgotten her! I wonder where she is, mamma?"

"Through the banking-house I have learned where her mother is, and I fancy Columbia Victoria is not far away from

her, my dear. One of these days I am planning to seek them out; meanwhile, let me hear your plans," replied Mrs. Lovelace.

"Well, mamma," said Elsie, "Miss Bascom knows some little girls who wish to learn to sew; and so, if you and their mothers all agree, we wish to form a children's club, and Miss Bascom has promised to teach us all how to write and sew better than we do now."

"A club with Miss Bascom as honorary president, although in reality an acting or active one, I suppose," said Mrs. Lovelace, with a laugh.

"Oh, well, mamma dear," said Elsie, "we are going to have lots of presidents! Each little girl at whose house we meet is to be president of that meeting."

"Quite an idea! The honors will be

then very equally divided," said her mother.

"And what are your regulations and rules to be?" she asked.

Elsie replied, —

"Our regulations are, To behave well ; and our rules are, To send away any who do not."

"Easily remembered, to say the least," said Mrs. Lovelace, and added, —

"But I do not know, after all, but that in their very simplicity is found all that is needed. And your object is, as I understand it, to sew for charity, and to learn to write nice letters. Am I right, Elsie?"

"Yes, mamma," replied the child; "to write nice letters to my little Hazelwood friends."

"And what is the name of your club

to be?" asked Mrs. Lovelace, getting quite interested.

"Well, mamma," replied Elsie, "Miss Bascom thought that because I came from America, and was the first to propose the plan, that we ought to call it the 'Golden Rod Club;' but I told her that I thought that as the most of the members would be little English girls, the 'Rosebud Club' would be a prettier name. What do you think, mamma?"

"It will certainly be more complimentary, at least; for the rose is to England what I hope the golden rod will some day be to America,—its national flower.

"You may not know it, dear," continued Mrs. Lovelace, "but the golden rod is said to grow in a hundred varieties in the beautiful land we have but just left; and its gorgeous coloring reflects

itself from North to South, East to West. And the fact that three States have already chosen it for their State flower, proves its already established popularity in American hearts.

"However, I quite like your pretty name, — the Rosebud Club, — and your plan is equally good."

"Then we may have it? — the club, I mean! Can we, mamma dear?" asked Elsie.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Lovelace.

"I think it will be a very nice way to spend two hours every week. I have such confidence in Miss Bascom, that I know that she will select only the choicest companions for my little daughter."

"Let me thank you, Mrs. Lovelace," said the governess, who had been a silent listener to Elsie and her mother.

“Let me thank you for your confidence. I am quite sure that the names, which I shall first submit to you, will be those of whom you will approve.”

“And now,” said Mrs. Lovelace, “Miss Bascom and you, Elsie, have full powers. Go on with your plans for the good of others, and I will be your first ‘guest of honor.’”

.

On the day appointed for the first meeting of the Rosebud Club, twelve little girls met at Griffin Gate for the two hours’ struggle with pen and needle.

Mrs. Lovelace and Elsie stood to receive them, and Miss Bascom introduced the children, giving their names in full.

Elsie, as she gave her ever sweet smile to each one who passed her, could not

help but wish that she might hear just one dear, familiar name.

As she thought this, she was attracted towards the sweet face of a little girl who was at the very farthest end of the line.

Elsie felt herself drawn towards the child, although unable to tell why.

She thought she reminded her of some one that she had before seen, but was at a loss to tell who.

An unfortunate noise just at the moment of introduction prevented her from hearing only, —

“Miss Elfrieda” —

Elsie clasped the little girl's hand, and said, —

“Oh, what a pretty name! Elfrieda!”

“They call me Frieda,” replied the girl.

“And you may call me so if you want.”



"They call me Frieda." — Page 122.

"That is prettier still," said Elsie; "and so I am going to call you my little friend Frieda — what?"

She waited to hear the girl's surname, and the latter gave it, —

"Frazer — Frieda Frazer!"

Elsie could not control her simple manifestation of joy. She threw her arms around Frieda in an outburst that quite took the latter by surprise.

"Oh, you dear little friend!" cried Elsie.

"I know you are his little daughter. Dear Captain Frazer! I told him I should love you, and I do!

"Mamma, mamma!" she cried excitedly, "see, shake hands with our friend Frieda Frazer, Captain Frazer's daughter!"

"My papa said that you and your

mother were old friends of his, and now I know just what he meant," said Frieda.

"Yes; this is a happy surprise for us all," said Mrs. Lovelace.

"And this is Frieda Frazer, who gave the first help to the little steerage baby!" she added; and Mrs. Lovelace threw her arms about the child in loving embrace.

So was the new friendship between Frieda and Elsie firmly and fondly established!

"Papa told me all about that little baby," said Frieda; "and he said mamma and he were going to try and call on you both very soon."

"Oh, we shall be so glad to see them!" said Mrs. Lovelace and Elsie together; and the latter added,—

"We are going to sew for that same little baby, Frieda, and have lots of nice

things ready for her when mamma and I go to see her.

"We have only just heard where she lives."

The Rosebud Club was called to order by Elsie, who rapped gently upon the low table with the very proper symbols, — a silver thimble upon one little hand, and a silver penholder in the grasp of the other.

Miss Bascom stood by her side, and cheerfully consented, when asked, to give the plan of the club. She explained: Letters were to be written at each meeting of the club, and exchanged between its youthful members, and answers to them were to be written at the following session.

An hour of each afternoon was to be devoted to sewing, for the present for

Columbia Victoria, who was, as Miss Bascom wittily said, "the only life member of the Rosebud Club!"

The fee required was a shilling from each little girl at each meeting, and this was to be the fund for purchasing materials for work.

Each little hostess was to be the president for the time being, and would be required to write an account of her own meeting, thus giving her an extra lesson in penmanship; and by so doing no secretary would be required.

Miss Bascom was asked to take charge of the money collected, and was appointed to use it as her judgment prompted.

Thus there was no vain seeking and striving for office, for there were no offices to seek or strive for; and if at times parliamentary rule was disregarded,

politeness was never wanting, and was the first guide to harmony.

So the Rosebud Club began its life, with an example that might well be followed by others of older growth, with sweet thoughts for the welfare of others, and a tender regard for all.

Fortunate Columbia Victoria! Hers was indeed an enviable heritage, — the fragrance that blossomed from such lives, from such loving thoughts of happy children!

It was not at all strange that with such a pleasant beginning, and with such a good teacher as Miss Bascom, the club did good work for their own improvement and for Columbia Victoria, whom the children soon came to regard as their little queen; for did she not reign in their loving hearts?

CHAPTER VIII



NE glance at Hazelwood and its people !

Its fields are full of the budding promise of the harvest. Spring in all its glory is upon them.

The pink and white bloom of the cherry and apple orchards are as bright in coloring as the cheeks of Hazelwood maidens.

The farmers are busy sowing, that they may reap a full abundance.

The birds have come again !

The happy, happy birds! They warble new songs, yet songs that are ever old, of praise to Him who notes the sparrow's fall!

Changes have come into the home-life of the village, and changes are yet to come.

Hardly had the villagers received the disappointing news that Mrs. Lovelace and Elsie would not return to them with the June roses, hardly had their tears been wiped away after this bitter disappointment, when more astounding news came with the announcement of the beloved minister of the village, Rev. Mr. Oldrive, that he was to return to England with his family.

Flattering offers he had, they knew, declined many times; but as he stood in the porch of the church, after the

hour of service, he told his people that he felt this present call "one not to be overlooked."

"My old father and mother," he said, "cannot be much longer with me, and since I can serve God and them too, I feel a tug at my heart-strings which I cannot resist.

"Shed no tears for me, but rather have your smiles and your helping hands ready and waiting for the new-comer."

Up at Falcons-height the news brought great sorrow ; but neither Judge nor Mrs. Goodwin felt it right to advise against the teachings of the fifth commandment.

Rachel, whose wise speeches were not always put into the finest of English, said, when she heard the news,—

"Seems mos' like all Hazelwood was

goin' away, either by the seminary" (meaning the cemetery) "or the steamer!"

Little Jamie Armitage had now become a steady visitor at Falcons-height, and it was even doubtful if he could be persuaded to leave it long enough to visit his grandpa when the time should come for him to do so.

The little fellow had tossed aside his crutches, and was able to walk about almost like his old self.

His Queen Lady was to him the same object of his childish affection and boyish reverence.

Life at Falcons-height moved on in the same quiet way; but when the English letters came, they shed a hallowed light of sweet memories, and "Auld Lang Syne" became the popular song of the hour.

One day Mrs. Goodwin, on entering her kitchen, found Bridget sitting with her elbow resting on the table, and her head listlessly bent, and held in her broad palm.

"O missus, shure and faith, Oi've got it too!" she said as her mistress entered.

"Got what?" questioned Mrs. Goodwin.

"Och! Oi've the faver," replied Bridget.

"The fever, Bridget!" repeated Mrs. Goodwin. "What fever? Put out your tongue, and let me see if anything really does ail you. You do not look sick, Bridget," persisted the good woman.

"Och! it's not me tongue that's disased, and it's not me stomach, shure; but it's me hea-r-r-t," replied the despondent Bridget. "It's me very hea-r-r-t," she repeated.

"Your heart! Who, pray, has been telling you such nonsense, Bridget?" asked Mrs. Goodwin, not as yet discerning the meaning of her humble housemaid.

"Shure, mum, it's me very hea-r-r-t itself tills me Oi've the faver,—the English or the Oirish faver, or anny wake-niss ye may name it!

"Oi'm goin' to lave you, if ye plase," said Bridget.

"Going to leave me?" inquired her mistress, much astonished at the abrupt notice of her faithful servant.

"The very same, mum!

"And lave Hazelwood too!

"And Ameriky too!" replied the girl, leading up to the facts one by one, and firmly closing her lips together after every declaration, as if to show a determination that nothing could unsettle.

She continued, —

“ Oi’m that lonesome-like since she wint, shure, that Oi’m goin’ oover to the ould counthry.

“ Me sisther Honora has been afther wanting me to coom for a long, long toime, and noo me aunt writes that her ould man is gone, and she nades me.

“ Me aunt, she has sint me me passage, and Oi’m goin’, by yer lave, mum.”

“ By my leave, Bridget! I should think that you were going without my leave!” said Mrs. Goodwin.

“ But then,” she continued, “ Bridget, I shall not try to keep you here with us; for when the heart beckons homeward, another’s hand should never interfere. Keep up good cheer, Bridget, until you go.”

“ And it’s kind ye’s always was to

me, shure!" said Bridget, "and him too, the both of ye's, — the master as will. Me aunt, she kapes a lodgin'-house near London, and it's there Oi'll be going first; but plase, mum, would ye's be afther givin' me her address? Oi should loike to be looking into her swate face, shure, just for the onct more, — the swate darlint!"

The name was unspoken, but the responsive chord both knew was the one that bound the hearts of all to the little girl whose life had left its sweetness everywhere in the little village of Hazelwood; and with a promise to give Bridget Elsie's London address, Mrs. Goodwin left the kitchen, while Bridget, evidently much relieved by her confession, commenced to sing, "Saint Patrick's Day in the Morning," with a spirit that indicated a light heart!

“Well, wife,” said Judge Goodwin at the teatable, that night, —

“Wife, it begins to look as if we should soon be not only the oldest inhabitants, but almost the only inhabitants, left in Hazelwood, or — shall we go too, with the rest, wife? What say you?”

“Not yet a while,” said his wife, “but perhaps later; perhaps, say, before the snows of another winter we will go. I have to tell you, sir, that a very important member of your family is going, however, to join the English colony across.”

“Oh, I think I can easily guess,” said the Judge, — “Bridget!

“You may be sure her aunt is a ‘second fiddle’ in the case, and it will not be long before Bridget will find a new home, I’ll venture.

“The poor girl has mourned sincerely

for the two losses that have come into her life below-stairs! The children," he continued, "were both dear to her; and she has been very faithful to them. So we will send her off with a 'God-speed!' and a five-pound note."

.

When the Liverpool steamer sailed a fortnight later, its second-class list of passengers bore the name, —

“BRIDGET O’LEARY,”

the “O” being the letter most plainly indicated; for as it was the only letter of the alphabet Bridget could herself write, she had made her mark within the circle, around which another had written her name.

Bridget had set much store by the magnetic circle.

She had once told Mrs. Goodwin that her name was, —

“O’Leary, ma’am.

“Plase mark the ‘O,’ for it’s the lettther, shure, that manes more than all the ithers!

“It was me father and me grand-father, that sit mooch by it, faith!”

It had been quite a shock to her Irish pride when Mrs. Goodwin replied, —

“It is not one, but every, letter of our name, Bridget, that we should take pride in; for it lies with us alone to honor or dishonor it.

“Try always to keep it, the good name we are told to choose, — the one your father left you, I am sure.”

.

It was not long after landing that Bridget began looking up the address given her by Mrs. Goodwin; and one

morning in May, when the happy home that had been chosen as such by Elsie's mother smiled in its spring charms, the gate leading up the walk clicked on its hinges, and the new-comer was announced by Wilson, the housemaid, to the family in the sitting-room above-stairs,—

“If you please, Miss Elsie, there be two women below, and a child, waiting to see you; and they seem that impatient, they are walking back and forth.”

“To see me, Wilson?” said Elsie. “I will come right down,” and she followed with quick steps to the kitchen; and there stood,—

Bridget O'Leary!

Yes, Bridget, once the faithful hand-maiden of Falcons-height!

At sight of Elsie her tears, which were always easy of call, attested the joy she

felt at once again seeing her young mistress.

Excitedly she took the latter's small hand in hers, and imprinted in her homely but sincere fashion kisses upon kisses, murmuring, meanwhile, "The swate darlint! God bliss ye!"

Elsie herself was for the moment too surprised to say anything but the name so associated with her happy life at Falcons-height.

"Bridget! Bridget!" she repeated; then collecting her thoughts, she said in earnest inquiry, —

"Why, Bridget, where did you come from? and is any one else with you?"

By Elsie's suspicious looks one might easily have supposed that she was really expecting, like Cinderella of old, a visit from her fairy godmother!

Bridget replied in humble confession, —

“Shure, Oi was that lonesome-like, Miss Elsie, afther ye wint away, that Oi could nayther ate nor shla-pe.

“But, to be shure, miss,” she added in apology,

“Oi was that glad to see ye, miss, that Oi forgot, shure, that me sisther Honora, the wan, you remember, Oi asked you to lo-câte, waits out in the gy-ar-den.

“By ye lave, miss, Oi’ll sphake to her.”

She called from the window, —

“Coom in! Coom in, Honora!”

To be sure, it was just a bit of disappointment to Elsie to think that a stranger, and not a friend, was to come in!

But was it a stranger who responded to Bridget’s call?

A tidy-looking woman entered, bearing in her arms a neatly dressed baby.

“Och! and it’s me day of good loock, shure, too, Bridget,” said the new-comer, as she grasped first one hand and then the other, then the little dress, of the child Elsie!

Yes, there stood the two humble sisters, Bridget and “sisther Honora,” who was none other than the Widow Sullivan, holding in her arms, —

Columbia Victoria!

Bridget, in her ignorance of it all, looked on in wonderment, but was told all by Elsie, who, taking from its mother’s arms the little steerage baby, bent tenderly over into its dimpled face, and said, —

“Only to think, baby dear, and you are Bridget’s little niece!

“Now, if you could only have told

me so on the steamer that day, I might have told you the way to Hazelwood.

“But of course, baby dear, you didn’t know how to ; did you, baby?”

And the baby, opening wide its great blue eyes, seemed to confirm Elsie’s words to it.

“And only to think, ye’s was right beside me sisther Honora, and Oi was asking ye to find her!” said Bridget!

The two humble women seemed to understand the truth of the surprise.

So was a new interest excited in the wee little baby, who could only express its feelings by sign language, as it thrust its chubby little thumb into its mouth, and thus showed its happy content.

Mrs. Lovelace joined the group; and for a while Bridget had all she could do to answer the questions of her two in-

terrogators, whose hearts would always yearn for tidings from Falcons-height.

“And how is my bird family, Bridget?” asked Elsie.

“Thriving, Miss Elsie,” answered Bridget.

“Shure, the little shnow-birds, they all wint long ago, and noo there be all kinds chir-r-uping for you, miss; but Jamie, he’s that kind to thim, that they all loove him.”

Before Bridget left, a place had been made for her in the household; and with a promise to take up her new duties “on a Saturday week,” the baby and her escort left the house.

“How funny things are sometimes, mamma!” said Elsie, as she followed her humble visitors out of sight.

“Now, if we only had done as you

said, and commenced to look for Bridget's sister Honora in the steerage, why, we would have found her; wouldn't we?

"It all seems like a story; doesn't it, mamma?"

"Ah, my child," said Mrs. Lovelace, "our lives are story-books themselves!

"Story-books that others than ourselves will read, and so we must keep the pages pure and unstained.

"For instance, the lives of even these two humble women have taught the lesson of faithfulness and gratitude, not always found in the world of their superiors."

"And this was your secret, mamma!" said Elsie.

"Yes, dear, in part," said her mother. "Mrs. Goodwin wrote me that I might expect to see Bridget any day. But,

dearie, there are others to come from Hazelwood ; and since the day is not just determined, I will not keep you longer in suspense, but tell you now that I am daily looking for a short visit from the Oldrives, before Mr. Oldrive takes charge of his new parish here."

It was almost too much happiness for one day of a little girl's life, so Elsie thought, and her dreams were full of familiar faces ; and when she awoke she could almost fancy that she heard a baby's innocent laughter, as a blessing upon her young life, — her simple story-book, whose pages were always filled with tender thoughts for others, and the innocent baby itself.

Yes, Elsie's life was a story-book that could never cause a blush to its readers.

CHAPTER IX



MAMMA, mamma!

“See this! Read!”
said Elsie, running
up to her mother early
one morning, and carry-
ing in tight grasp an
open letter.

“See! Read, dear
mamma! A real live count! a truly
count! Only think, mamma!”

Mrs. Lovelace took the letter, and read
it, then passing it back to Elsie, said in
mild rebuke, —

“And is my little daughter so carried
away with the thought of seeing a count,

a stranger, and, for all she may know, an adventurer?"

The letter was simply an invitation to attend the next meeting of the "Rosebuds;" but off in one corner, as if written by a child's hand, were the words,—

"To meet the Count de Montarnaud."

"See," said Elsie, as she pointed to the colored decoration at the top of the page,—the head of a cat, surrounded by a wreath of rosebuds.

"See; that is our mascot, and it means, good luck for the Rosebud Club, mamma!"

"A mascot! And pray what is a mascot, dearie?" asked Mrs. Lovelace, as if disturbed that anything like superstition should come into the confiding and innocent lives of the children.

"Why, a mascot is supposed to bring

good luck, mamma," replied Elsie. "But of course it is only in fun, mamma," she continued; "for don't I know that it is only God that can send us good or bad luck?"

"So don't worry, dear mamma."

"Sometimes, too, little daughter," said Mrs. Lovelace, "the luck, as you call it, that seems most disappointing to us, is really the best fortune that could befall us; and we must always try to think that whatever comes from God is meant all for the best.

"Nothing is luck with Him, but intent, and what is best for us."

"But everybody is not as good as you, dear mamma," said Elsie.

"And so if they feel discouraged, they think something will bring them good luck.

"Anyway, kitty looks pretty with his black head peeping out from his wreath of rosebuds, and I like to look at him, just as I like to look at any pretty picture.

"But only think, mamma," again said Elsie,

"A really and truly count! I never saw one, you know."

"O my dear child!" said Mrs. Lovelace,

"It does not, I know, mean a count in reality, for English mothers are quite as correct in their teachings as are our good mothers of America, and I am sure that it is only some pleasant jest.

"Frieda's mother would never make a child's party to introduce a count. Absurd! English children are very properly kept much in seclusion until age and

propriety dictate their coming forward into the society of their elders.

“Indeed!” continued Mrs. Lovelace, “I have my suspicions already that it means some little boy ; perhaps some boy baby that they want the Rosebud Club to adopt, or to work for in charity, as for Columbia Victoria, — a charity baby !

“And what do you think about it, Miss Middlebrook ?” asked Mrs. Lovelace, as the former entered the sitting-room, to make her daily morning call.

“About what ?” asked the visitor.

The letter was passed into her hands to read ; and, having done so, she tossed it lightly to the table, and said, with a laugh, —

“The count has possibly heard of the latest arrivals of specie from America — and I can tell him it is gold, pure and

unalloyed," she added, looking as if in admiration of the noble traits of character that she was daily discovering in Mrs. Lovelace and her little daughter.

"But no," she continued,

"Jesting aside, you may be sure that it is only some merry joke,—nothing more.

"Confidence in Frieda's good mother is alone needed to tell me that.

"It may mean some new little baby. It is not very much else, you may believe."

"So I tell Elsie," said Mrs. Lovelace.

"But there is little time to speculate; for, see, the invitation has already been delayed in delivery—and why! it is this very afternoon, dearie. You must be getting ready before long."

Childlike, Elsie could not but feel that



“She started for Frieda Frazer’s home.” — *Page 153.*

some scion of nobility was to be the afternoon's guest; and a live count inspired much the same feeling as that which a wild animal at the "Zoo" would, because unknown to her.

Later, she dressed herself in her new challie dress, and, placing a large white hat upon her head, she started for Frieda Frazer's home, to meet the Rosebud Club and its guest of honor.

"Good-by, dear mamma," she said in parting.

"Good-by. I will tell you all about him when I come back."

Reaching Frieda's house, she followed with the rest of her mates into the dressing-room.

Somehow it seemed to her as if the very air of mystery was about everywhere, and the children even seemed to breathe

it, she thought, and more than one was overheard by her asking, —

“I wonder who he is?”

Elsie listened for a baby's cry, but none came to her ears.

She joined the club in the library, and the usual routine was followed: —

A little song, a little sewing, a little writing, a little talking, — then dismissal, Frieda previously announcing that she would present the “Count de Montarnaud” to her guests in the room adjoining; and to it she led the way, all following, curiosity over the mysterious guest of the afternoon manifest in every young face. But, —

There he stood!

“Dressed all in shining black!” as Elsie afterwards told her mother, and continued thus her description, —

“Upon his hands and feet he wore black coverings.

“His eyes were quite large, and light in color.

“His whiskers were long and black, as any Frenchman’s should be, but were worn more as Englishmen wear theirs, mamma,—at the side; mutton-chops do they call that fashion? They were longer, though; and his hair was jet black, with a parting down the back of his head, so even—oh, so even and straight, as if it had been done with a ruler instead of a comb!

“He could not or did not speak very good English, mamma; for, if you believe it, he could only speak just one word of greeting,—the same thing to every one,—and that was—let me see if I can say it just exactly as the count did,” said

Elsie, while a roguish twinkle lighted her pretty eyes, and she seemed to be making the effort to repeat the count's greeting to his little friends.

"Yes, I have it! I have it, mamma!" and she repeated with a laugh, —

"Me-ouw! Me-ouw!" then asked her mother, —

"And what was the baby's name, mamma?"

"And who was the Count de Montar-naud?"

"Why, a black cat, of course; your mascot, as you call him," promptly replied her mother.

"Yes; you are right, dear mamma.

"He was only a black cat that Frieda's father brought her on his last trip over.

"They have given it the family name

of Montarnaud,—the Count de Montarnaud.”

Both mother and daughter laughed merrily over the affair. The former said, —

“And did I not tell you, dearie, that he might be only an adventurer?”

“Yes, dear mamma,” replied Elsie; “but you also said, you remember, that he might be a charity baby! And he wasn’t either, you see. So Columbia Victoria is still Queen of the Rosebuds!” said Elsie.

“Yes, Britannia rules,” said Mrs. Lovelace.

“And so does America, hand in hand,” said Elsie, with her accustomed loyalty to the home that she knew the best.

“I should think, Elsie, that that was a pretty long name for an innocent little

kitten to be burdened with," said Mrs. Lovelace, still continuing the subject.

"Oh, yes it is, mamma; but Frieda said they just called him Monty for short," replied Elsie.

"That is it," said Mrs. Lovelace. "He is the real aristocrat, in sympathy with the very humblest.

"Nature's noblemen are 'to the manner born.' Being such, they need assume nothing, as do those others who betray by their very efforts at seeming that they are not what they try to be.

"The true aristocrat, the true nobleman, is one who is ever in sympathy with all that is good; and goodness exists with the humblest.

"Choose, little daughter, of course, for your companions through life from the very best,—from those from whom

you can best profit in noble example ; but never look down upon the humblest, so long as they live up to the one common birthright of goodness and honor."

However, the jest was much enjoyed ; and the Count de Montarnaud was looked upon ever after as a welcome guest by the members of the Rosebud Club, and his welfare eagerly asked for by his new acquaintances.

Columbia Victoria remained, however, the little "Queen of the Rosebuds."

Little hands worked for her !

Little fingers plied the needle for her !

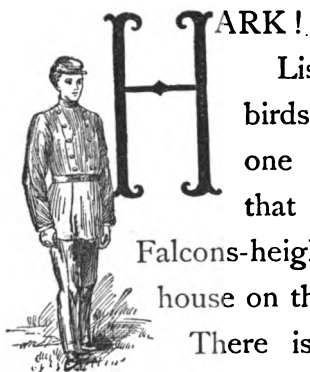
Little hearts went fondly out in constant thought of her !

Little tongues voiced the one sentiment, that it was good to care for her ; for was she not "one of the least" ?

And so the Rosebud Club lived on, in

their interest for one of the little children whom He so lovingly held in His arms. And the innocent baby will ever have cause to bless the hour that brought to her the kisses of one of Nature's noblest ones, — the kisses of Elsie Lovelace, her benefactress.

CHAPTER X



HARK!

Listen to the song of the birds as they hop one by one upon the rose-trellis that covers the walls of Falcons-height, — the great stone house on the hills of Hazelwood!

There is a freedom in their song that seems to say, —

“This was our first home, and, although some of our friends have left us, yet here we come again to renew our friendships with the hour that first brought us together.”

So it is that to little readers Falcons-

height again beckons in the sunlight; and although some are missing, some of the sweet roses have faded, there is still a perfume in the air that tells of home, — that reminds its little visitors of a day in the same month of roses not very long ago, when some of the little people listened to the voice of little Miss Faith, and to the merry laugh of "Little Daughter," on a memorable birthday just two years ago.

Yes, it is again the twenty-second of June; and despite all that threatened to cast a shadow over the home, Falconsheight and the villagers of Hazelwood seem to be in gala attire and spirits.

Under the apple-trees the long table is again spread, with the promise of a bountiful repast after the sports shall be over; old and young alike are again enjoying the holiday.

Little Milly Morris, looking fresh and attractive as ever, is one of the guests, while her dear old grandfather, whose hand she firmly clasps, is proud of the attention shown the little maiden, as the children gather about her; while Milly herself is equally happy in knowing that on the lawn by her side is the queer-looking wagon that Grandpa Stimpson once fashioned for her, but which now holds her "teenty tointy baby bruvver," — for did not the day's invitation read, —

"Come one and all,
Both large and small" ?

And in response to it, Milly had urged her mother to let Herman ride to the *fête* with her.

Flitting about, as busy as any one present, runs Jamie Armitage; and if

occasionally the little fellow rests by the wayside, or on the green lawn, he is too proud to accept any pity, and always answers those who ask him if he is tired, —

“I am waiting, thank you;” but he never adds that he is “waiting — to rest!”

Yonder is a young lad to whom two years have brought the crown of manliness, — Ned Ashton, the boy king of Hazelwood.

“But why are you dressed in that peculiar dress?” is asked many times of him; and his answer always is, —

“These are the clothes I wear at the Military School, and Judge Goodwin asked me to wear them to-day to please him.”

“What for?” ask his hearers.

Judge Goodwin, coming up to Ned just at the time, answers his over-curious guests by giving his orders to the young lad, —

“Ned, run up to the house, and you will find in the library a leather bag with straps. Place the straps over your head, young man, and report immediately to me.”

Ned gives the military salute to his superior officer, and proceeds to obey orders.

“I forgot to say, Ned,” called Judge Goodwin,

“There is also a small leather strap bearing the letters F. P. O. that you will find there too. Fasten it around your cap.”

When Ned returned he really looked quite like a postman of the day. His suit was blue-gray, his cap decorated with the

letters named, and the leather bag was itself a very good counterpart of those carried by Uncle Sam's trusty clerks.

Again saluting Judge Goodwin in true military style, he waited for further orders from his superior officer,—the host of the hour.

The latter called in a loud voice, —
“Attention !”

It was as if a pin might be heard, even though dropped upon the green lawn.

“Friends and neighbors,” said the Judge, with a slight tremor in his voice, that indicated great tenderness of feeling,

—“Friends old and young, this, as you know, is the day we celebrate,—sacred to us all by sweet memories of the absent.

“From across the water,” he contin-

ued, "there came the request, from one we all well remember, to make the day a happy one for you" —

"Elsie!"

"Sister Elsie!"

"Elsie Lovelace!"

Interrupted his hearers; and the boys, taking up the refrain, called loudly for, —

"Three cheers for Elsie Lovelace!" which were given with an earnestness that told of the enduring love for, and memory of, the little girl.

Nor was her mother forgotten; for with the same spirit three more cheers were given for Mrs. Lovelace.

Then the Judge continued, —

"At first Mrs. Goodwin and I felt that it might not be possible to make the day pleasant for you, fearing that memories of past years might add a touch of

sadness to the hour for thoughts of—her!”

All knew the reference indicated in his voice, more perhaps than in his words. All knew of his reference to little Faith Goodwin; and the boys, at a given signal from their leader, Ned Ashton (whose life in the military academy had been of much service in teaching him not only discipline, but respect), took off their caps in reverent memory.

It was an unspoken tribute to her whose good example would ever be held dear to Hazelwood hearts, in sweetest thought.

“But,” continued Judge Goodwin, “let there be only joy in our hearts to-day, and let only the pleasures of the past reflect themselves in this hour, and let us live as befits the friends of two such

little girls as Faith and Elsie,—in happiness and good will.”

Continuing, he said,—

“I received late yesterday this cablegram,—

“Let me read it to you ; it says,—

“‘Good-day. and good-morrow, but never good-bye!’”

Great applause followed the reading of the message. All knew who was the sender of it, even before Judge Goodwin announced, “It is signed with the name of one whom we all well know and love.”

“Elsie Lovelace!” cried the crowd.

“Yes, Elsie Lovelace,” said the Judge ; then added, with a merry twinkle in his eyes,—

“The day before, however, I received

another message from the same little girl, by post, which read, —

“‘Look in the Falcons-height post-office on the stone wall by the driveway gate, on the morning of June twenty-second.’”

“And so,” he continued, —

“I appoint Ned Ashton the one to inquire at the Falcons-height post-office for the mail, and bring us the results of his search. Forward — march, Captain!” said Judge Goodwin.

Ned Ashton, following the order, made a double-quick to the rude-looking box that was still fastened to the wall near the garden gate.

Ah, how many little messages had in those happy years gone by, when their absent playmates were with them, found their way into the little box!

How many little valentines had been tossed into it by the hands of the loving children!

But surely, what could there be in it now, after the snows of winter had crept into it, and the spring rains had dropped into its rude opening?

Surely, what could there be in it to-day? thought the waiting children.

Eagerly they watched Ned Ashton as he carefully lifted the lid upon its rusty hinges, and brought out, one by one, a collection of letters and dainty-looking packages addressed to the Hazelwood children!

When Ned again appeared among his companions, he looked quite like a post-man delivering his Christmas mail.

The children, however, some of them at least, could not understand the seem-

ing mystery, and looked on in wonderment, almost willing to believe that some witchery was in it all.

“Now,” said Judge Goodwin,

“You may still continue, Ned, in your service of usefulness, and perform the duties of a Falcons-height postman, by delivering, according to the addresses named, your large mail.”

Ned Ashton found his way among the crowd, and delivered his stock of remembrances into the many hands outstretched to receive them. A letter and a little gift was each child's share ; and with their gratitude went out a silent blessing upon their absent benefactress.

“But how did they get across the water?”

This was the oft-repeated question, — a question that Judge Goodwin promised

to answer after the guests had seated themselves at the table, under the apple-trees ; and to it they all quickly adjourned.

At either end of the table was a picture of Faith Goodwin and Elsie Lovelace, each trimmed about with greens and flowers.

In the centre of the table was a mammoth steamboat made of ices and sherbet, with the small flags of both England and America flying gracefully from the mast-head.

Spun candy in great abundance about its hull made an admirable representation of "old ocean."

The goodly company being all seated, Judge Goodwin reverently asked a blessing upon the day, concluding with great fervor, —

“ God bless the absent ones ! ”

Ices and sherbets fairly melted away as sweet morsels under little tongues !

Candies, and fruits alike vanished, — some, it is to be feared, being hidden away into the gaping pockets of the children who had a thought of to-morrow and its wants !

At last, with great dignity, Judge Goodwin arose from his seat, and told his guests that he had a letter to read to them.

From one end of the long table to the other the clapping of hands told of the welcome awaiting the promised letter ; and the Judge commenced to read (after breaking the neatly made seal) the letter, well written by a dear familiar hand. Yes, and well worded too ; for had not its writer been studying letter-writing of late,



“Judge Goodwin arose.” — *Page 174.*

with her new-made friends of the Rosebud Club?

The letter read, —

MY DEAR FRIENDS, ALL, —

To-day is, as you know, our birthday, — Faith's and mine ; and as I do not want you ever to forget either of us, I have asked that you might make a holiday of it.

Over here in Hampstead we are celebrating it too ; for mamma has invited the Rosebud Club to come to Griffin Gate, and we are having such a nice time ! Are you ?

Still, I am always thinking of you all in Hazelwood ; be very sure of that. I shall never forget you ; and I hope you will never forget me.

The other day I sent a package of letters to my dear godfather, and asked him not to deliver them until to-day.

I thought you might like to look into the old mail-box once more.

Some of the little presents I bought here, and the others my fairy godmother will tell you about

How I should like to see you all to-day !

Please always think lovingly of your little friends Faith and Elsie.

“ Good-day and good-morrow,
But never good-by ! ”

The letter was received with another outburst of merriment. And thus closed a day of happiness and sweet memories !

Sweet memories !

Life at Falcons-height was ever full of them ; and though to-day the great house resounded only to the echoes of the voices of its little queens, all were lovingly impressed with the tender message, —

“ Good-day and good-morrow,
But never good-by ! ”

and took courage with their faith that with the angel one it was well to-day, and the long morrow of the future would ever

cast its bright gleams of remembrance about her gentle goodness; and so with her example always before them in memory, the word good-by could never intrude itself.

For Elsie Lovelace the message is equally true. For, although we leave her across the water, fond memories of her can but come to all who have thus known her; and it may be we shall again greet her in the morrow of renewed friendship, when she shall to womanhood come. And so let us close our lips to the harsh word, — Good-by!

.

With the truth of the message still lingering in our hearts and ears, we leave Hazelwood — true, perhaps, it may be, never again to return to it, except as we

renew our friendships with the Hazelwood
Stories ; with, —

LITTLE MISS FAITH,
“ LITTLE DAUGHTER,”

AND

THE ROSEBUD CLUB.

And with the sweet and truthful sentiment
for both and for all, and for you, their
faithful friends, young readers, —

“Good-day and good-morrow,
But never good-by !

